Women of Bresse

The village fêtes of Bresse, still continued in many an out-of-the-way little town, are the usual drinking and dancing *festins* of the comic opera merry-making variety. They are simple and proper enough exhibitions, and never descend to the freedom of speech and manners that such exhibitions often do in the Midi.

None more than Brillat-Savarin has carried the fame of Bresse abroad. A one-time member of the Cour de Cassation, he perhaps was better known to the world at large as the father of gastronomy in France. His "Psychologie de Gout," if nothing else, would warrant giving him this title.

Val-Romey — the Vallis Romana of the Emperors — and Bugey had for overlords the Sires de Thoire et Villars. It, too, came in time to the Ducs de Savoie, by gift and by heritage, and also was ceded in 1601 to Henri IV, by virtue of the Treaty of Lyons.

Dombes, principality in little, although at first a part of the kingdom of Burgundy, later fell by favour of circumstances to the Sires of Beaugé and afterwards to the Sire de Beaujeau. Finally it turned its fortunes into the hands of the Bourbons, when Mademoiselle de Montpensier came to rule its destinies. She turned it over to Louis XIV as payment for his

authorization for her marriage with Monsieur de Lauzun.

The princess made this sacrifice of love in vain, and Dombes fell to the Duc de Maine, while Lauzun languished in the prison Pignerolo, for the king did not abide by his back-handed favouritism.

On the border between the mediæval dukedom and the principality of Dombes, to-day the Départements of the Saône et Loire and the Ain, is a race apart from other mankind hereabouts. In numerous little villages, notably at Boz and Huchisi, one may still observe the dark Saracen features of the ancients mingled with those of to-day. A monograph has recently appeared which defines these peoples as something quite unlike the other varied races now welded into the citizens of twentieth century France.

Modern vogue, style, fashion, or whatever you may choose to call it, is everywhere fast changing the old picturesque costume into something of the ready-made, big-store order, but to stroll about the highways and byways in these parts and see men in baggy Turkish trousers with their coats and waistcoats tied together by strings or ribbons in place of conventional buttons, is as a whiff of the Orient, or at least a reminder of the long ago.

The women dress in a distinct, but perhaps not otherwise very remarkable, manner, save that an occasional "Turk's-Head" turban is seen, quite as Oriental as the *culotte* of the men. A blend of Spain, of Arabia, of Persia and of Turkey could not present a costume more droll than that of the "*Chizerots,*" as these people are known.

Another *petit pays,* and one of the most remarkably disposed, politically, of all the old provinces which go to make up modern France, is what is known even to-day as the Pays de Gex. It belonged successively to the house of Joinville, to the Comté de Savoie and to the States of Berne and Geneva. The Duc de Savoie, by the treaty of 1601, ceded it to France, but a strip is still neutral ground for both Switzerland and France, which by common accord allows Geneva full access to the territory in order to establish its communications with Swiss territory on the west and south shores of Lac Leman, particularly to that region beyond Saint-Gingolphe.

The name Gex is evolved from the Latin Gesium, the capital of a kingdom owning but a length of six leagues and a width of about half as much. The Bernese and the Genevois conquered it in turn, and to-day its personality

is *nil* except that one recalls it as the head centre for the trade in Gruyère cheese, the kind which we commonly call Swiss cheese. It is in the Pays de Gex, on the railway line from Gex to Geneva, that one notes the name of Fernay and endeavours to recall for just what it stands. At last it comes to one. Fernay possesses a literary shrine of note that all who pass this way may well remember. The wonder is that one did not recall it with less effort.

The whole town is virtually a monument to Voltaire. It was he who built the town, practically; that is, he furnished the land and the means to erect many of the meaner houses which surround the chateau which he came himself to inhabit, and from which, for a time, the rays of his brilliant wit were shed over the whole literary world of the eighteenth century.

After his flight from Berlin, Voltaire, the Seigneur de Fernay, founded Fernay, within six kilometres of the frontier and Geneva, and sought to attract Swiss watch-makers thither that a similar industry might there be established on French soil. Surely Voltaire was more of a benefactor of his race than he is usually considered.

The Voltaire manor, or chateau, albeit that it is nothing grandly monumental, still exists with

Chateau de Voltaire, Ferney

furniture and portraits of the time of the satirist. At the entrance to the chateau is a tiny chapel, built also by Voltaire when he was in that particular mood. Over its portal it bears the following words, "Deo Erexit Voltaire MDCCLXI." Arsène Houssaye called the words an impertinence, and, admitting Voltaire's genius, one is inclined to assent to the dictum. "My church," said Voltaire, "is erected to God, the only one throughout Christendom; there are thousands to Saint Jean, to Saint Paul and to all the rest of the calendar, but not another in all the world to God."

Such a romantically storied region as this might naturally be expected to abound in historic souvenirs and monuments almost without end. To an extent this is true, but such souvenirs and recollections of the past more frequently present themselves than do actual castle walls, be they ruined or well-preserved.

The antique lore of ancient Bresse goes back to Druidical days. Stone axes, Celtic tombs and medals, skeletons wearing bracelets and anklets of iron and copper have been found in great numbers, and from these have been built up a vague history of the earliest times.

Of Roman remains there are still evident many outlines of the camps of the legionaries,

innumerable evidences and tracings of old Roman highroads, with here and there fragments of aqueducts, baths and temples. Near Bourg have been discovered various medals of the ancient colony of Massilia, on the shores of the Mediterranean, and one wonders what were the relations of the Ostragoth peoples of Bresse with the Phoceans of Marseilles. History is non-committal.

There are no magnificent monumental remains of Roman times left in these parts save occasional fragments and towers which presumably served for signalling purposes as a part of the fortifications of the Saracens. For any architectural monuments of note one can not with certainty go back to a period earlier than that in which the Burgundian power was at its height, or to the time of Charles-le-Chauve in the ninth century.

The feudal memories of Bresse are chiefly the ruins of the seigneurial chateau at Chateauneuf, the chief-town of the Val-Romey. Built high on the summit of a peak of rock and surrounded by deep-cut fosses, and walls which drop down sheer like the sides of a precipice, this chief feudal residence of the Val-Romey was more a fortress than a delectable domestic establishment, though it served the functions of both, as

was frequently the case with the feudal edifice of its class. What it lacked in actual luxury or comfort it made up for in the added protection offered by its sturdy walls. This was notably true of all seigneurial residences which occupied isolated positions in the feudal epoch. Its walls to-day, shorn of any æsthetic beauty which they may once have possessed, and crumbling and moss-grown on every side, still rise a hundred or more feet in air above their rocky foundations, and in many places have a thickness of a dozen or fifteen feet. They built well in those old days, before the era of armoured cement covered with stucco. Modern builders make great claims for their product, but will it last? No man knows, and, from the fact that masonry cannot be built even to-day so as to stand up against shot and shell, one doubts if modern work is really as durable as that of a thousand years ago. The military architecture of feudal France, so often closely allied with that of the civic and domestic varieties, was preëminent in its time.

The religious architecture, the monasteries and churches, of these parts have certainly more ornate reminders of the undeniable opulence of the region than the secular examples still existing.

Connecting Bresse and the Franche Comté is a curious little battery of townlets that have never been mentioned in the guide-books, nor ever will be. A motor flight from Bourg-en-Bresse to Besançon evolved the following: First came a smug little town named briefly Pierre. It possesses a chateau, too, reckoned as one of the really remarkable examples of the style of Burgundian building. It certainly looks all that is claimed for it, though we saw it only in the dim twilight of a May evening. The impression was all-satisfying, and, that being what one really travels for, one should be content.

For a neighbour there was Champdivers, which recalled a memory of Odette de Champdivers, the one time companion of the poor Charles VI. during his latter unhappy days. Truly this was proving for us a most romantic region, a region utterly neglected by the great world of tourists who pick out the big-type names on the map and make up their itineraries accordingly.

On the banks of the Doubs, near the border of Bresse and the Comté, lies Molay, whose seigneur, Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the Templars, died at the stake in Paris during the playing of the great drama of 1314.

After Molay a succession of dwellings con-

tinues to the important frontier town and fortress of Dole, a decayed county-town whose official importance, even, has been absorbed by the fortified city and watch-making metropolis of Besançon. Dole will never be reckoned a city of celebrated art, but regardless of this its fine old Renaissance houses and Parliamentary Palace of other days all follow the architectural scheme which makes the civic and secular edifices of mid-France the most luxurious of their epoch.

Bourg, the capital of Bresse, has ever been one of the most important towns of France lying near the eastern frontier, though indeed as a fortified place the modern French military authorities give it scant value from a strategic point of view. Six great national highways cross and recross the city, and many of the narrow streets of the days of the dukes have lately given way to avenues and boulevards. From this one puts Bourg down as something very modern — which it is, in parts.

Built on the site of the ancient Forum Sebusianorum, the city came in time under the sway of Burgundy, of the Empire of the States of Savoy, and finally definitely allied itself with France in 1601.

Bourg is in the heart of Bresse. Its inhab-

itants are known as Bressans de Bresse, in contradistinction to those who live on the borders of the old province. *" Viv Mâcon pour beir et Bourg pour mangi "* — Mâcon for drinking and Bourg for eating — say the Bressans of Bresse, and with good reason.

The Bressan costume is most peculiar, at least so far as that of the women is concerned; the men might be of Normandy or Poitou. Only on a fête day will one see the real costume of the women of Bresse, but on such occasions the mere sight of the triple-decked, steeple-like coiffe — a good replica of an ornamental fountain in miniature — will suggest nothing so much as the costume of a masquerade.

The only palatial domestic or civic edifice notable in Bourg to-day is the Parliament Building of the ancient États de la Bresse. Of the many princely dwellings of the time of the Seigneurs de Bagé, and of the Savoyan princes of the sixteenth century, not a fragment remains, though the records tell of a splendid chateau-fort and an episcopal residence of like luxurious proportions which existed at the time of the union of Bresse with France. This may be the edifice of the États which now shelters the Musée Lorin. The longbeards disagree as to this, but the casual observer will be quite

willing to accept the suggestion. The monument is certainly a splendid one, even if its history is vague.

The famous Église de Brou at Bourg is intimately bound with the life of the nobles of mediæval times, as closely indeed as if it had been a secular establishment where lived lords and ladies and their courts. A description of this classic wonder of architectural art can have no extended place here. It must suffice to recall that it was erected by Philibert le Beau in completion of a vow made by his mother Marguerite de Bourbon. Within are the magnificently sculptured tombs of the two royalties and another of Marguerite d'Autriche. The sculpture of these famous tombs has been the subject of more than one monograph, and indeed the whole ornate structure — church, tombs and sculpture — is a never-ceasing source of supply to critics and archæologists.

The Italian style, in the most gracious of its flowering forms, is here united with the flamboyant Flemish school in a profligate profusion. The Église de Brou is one of the greatest marvels of Renaissance architecture in all the world.

North of Bourg, on the road to Louhans, through the heart of the Bresse so dear to gas-

tronomes, are the well conserved remains of the Chateau de Montcony, and those of more ruinous aspect which represent the departed glories of Duretal.

Cuiseaux' monumental remains are even more scant, and the town itself hardly resembles a town of Burgundy. It is more like a place in Switzerland or the Jura; indeed, to the latter region it once belonged, and only came to be Burgundian when the princes of the house, through some petty quarrel, took it for their own by force, as was the way in those gallant, profligate days.

Cuiseaux does possess, however, a ruined aspect of wall and rampart which suggests that it must have been one of the most admirably defended places of the neighbourhood, judging from an old fifteenth century plan preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Then it was proud of its ramparts which possessed thirty-six protecting towers. To-day but two of these sentinels remain, and it were vainglorious to claim too much for them, particularly since the modern plan of the town makes it look as conventionally dull and uninteresting as an Arab *ghourbi* in the Atlas, or an adobe village in Arizona.

At Pont-de-Vaux, between Bourg and Lou-

hans, one comes to a trim little town, an outgrowth of the ancient village of Vaux, belonging at one time to the Sires de Baugé, and later to the Duc de Savoie, Charles III, who made it a Comté in 1623. It afterwards grew to the dignity of a Duché, so made by Louis XIII. Much is preserved to-day of the ancient manner of building, and, all in all, it is quite as satisfactory an example of a mediæval town as has been left untouched by the mature hand of progress of these late days.

Nantua is known to the traveller in modern France only as another of those lakeside resorts which are such delightful places of sojourn for those who would avoid for a time the strife of great cities. It is a gem of a town, set in a diadem of beauty which surrounds the tiny lake of the same name, but it has no historic monuments, if we except the tomb of Charles le Chauve in the church. This at least entitles it to a passing comment here, this and the memory of a happy afternoon we passed by the crystal waters of this brilliant lake.

Midway between Bourg and Mâcon is Pont-de-Veyle. This old feudal town was once the particular possession of a brilliant line of seigneurs of France and Savoy, the last, under François I, being the Comte de Furstemburg,

who acquired it as a payment for certain levies of Germans that he had furnished the French monarch.

The ancient manor of the Furstemburgs still exists, but it is hardly of a proportion or architectural merit to have distinction. Here, too, are the reconstructed remains of the eighteenth century of a family chateau of the Maréchal de Lesdiguières, whose fortunes were more intimately bound up with Gap and Vizille than with this less accessible property. Like Vizille it has been "put into condition" in recent years, and, while lacking the mossy, romantic air of mediævalism, fulfils most of the demands of the worshipper at historic shrines.

There is still standing here an old city gate dating from the thirteenth century, and this in turn is surmounted by a belfry of the sixteenth. The ensemble suggests that it was once a part of a more noble fortress-chateau. The Maison des Savoyards was probably a princely rest-house when the nobles of its era passed this way. Beyond its name, and the elaborate decorations of its façade, there is nothing else to support the conjecture. Its history, whatever it may have been, is lost in the confusion with which many ancient records are covered to-day.

Turning southwest on the highroad, from

Burgundy into Savoy through the heart of Dombes, one soon reaches Châtillon-les-Dombes. As its name indicates, it is a descendant of the town which grew up around an ancient seigneurial residence here of the fourteenth century. Chiefly this is memory only, for the fragmentary débris takes on no distinction to-day beyond that of any other indiscriminate pile of stones and mortar.

Montluel, near-by, is in much the same category. It is famous only for the fact that it was here that Amé VII was presented the Duchê de Savoie by Sigismond in 1496, and that in troublous, mediæval days it was the safe haven for many political refugees from Geneva and Florence. Montluel, in Latin Mons Lupelli, was the capital of the fief of Valbonne. The remains existing to-day, and locally called "le chateau," are those of an edifice which had an existence and a career of sorts in the eleventh century, but which since that date has no recorded history.

To Pont d'Ain and Belley is still on the direct road to Savoy. On the great "route internationale" from Paris to Turin sits the ancient chateau of Pont d'Ain, which owes its name to the old bridge which once spanned the Ain at this point.

On an eminence high above the river is the old chateau built by the Sires de Coligny in 1590, the ancestors of the great admiral. Previously it had been the residence of the rulers of Savoy, and to this luxurious dwelling the princesses of the house invariably came to give birth to the inheritors to the throne. Louise de Savoie, the mother of François Premier, was born here in 1476, and here died Philibert II, Duc de Savoie, in 1504, he whose death gave impetus to the erection of that magnificent mausoleum, the Église de Brou.

Belley, a matter of fifty kilometres further on, is a veritable gateway through which passed the ancient Route de Savoie along which trotted the palfreys and rolled the coaches of Renaissance days.

Lacking entirely mediæval monuments of note, Belley ranks, judging from positive documentary evidence, as one of the most ancient towns of the border province lying between Burgundy and Savoy. Its episcopate dates from the year 412 A. D., and, if its feudal monuments have disappeared, its great episcopal palace of later centuries is certainly entitled to be considered an example of domestic architecture quite as appealing as many a feudal chateau of more warlike aspect.

So strong a centre of the church as Belley was bound to be prominent politically, and its bishops bore as well the title of Princes of the Empire.

Herein has been given an epitome of a round of travel in this forgotten and neglected border country lying between old Burgundy, Switzerland and Savoy. What it lacks in elaborate examples of feudal and Renaissance architecture it makes up for in storied facts of history, which though too extensive to be more than hinted at here are as thrilling and appealing as any chapter of the history of old France. For that reason, and the fact that some acquaintance with these tiny border provinces is necessary for a proper appreciation of the exterior relations of both Burgundy and Savoy, the détour has been made.

CHAPTER XV

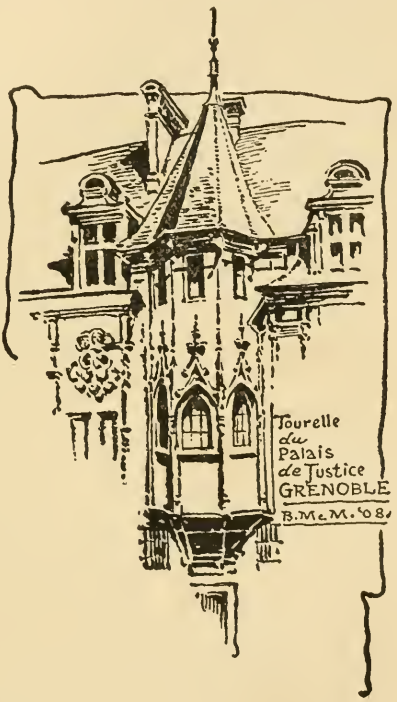
GRENOBLE AND VIZILLE: THE CAPITAL OF THE DAUPHINS

Dauphiny owes its name as a province to the rightful name of the eldest sons of the French kings down to the middle of the nineteenth century. The actual origin of the application of the name seems to have been lost, though the Comtes de Vienne bore a dolphin on their blazon from the eleventh century to the fourteenth, when Comte Humbert, the last Dauphin, made over his rights to the eldest son of Philippe de Valois, who acquired the country in 1343, bestowing it upon his offspring as his patrimony. Thus is logically explained the absorption of the title and its relations with the province, for it was then that it came first to be applied to that glorious mountain region of France lying between the high Alpine valleys and the shores of the Mediterranean.

The Dauphin, Humbert II, first established the Parlement du Dauphiné at Saint Marcellin in 1337, but within three years it was trans-

ferred to Grenoble, where it held rank as third among the provincial parliaments of France.

Saint Laurent, the Grenoble suburb, not the mountain town hidden away in the fastness of the mountain *massif* of the Chartreuse, occupies the site of an ancient Gaulish foundation called Cularo. Its name was later changed to Gratianopolis, out of compliment to the Emperor Gratian, which in time evolved itself into Grenoble, the capital of "the good province of our most loyal Dauphin."



Grenoble's chief architectural treasure is its present Palais de Justice, the ancient buildings of the old Parliament of Dauphiny and its Cour des Comptes. Virtually it is a chateau of

state and is, moreover, the most important monument of the French Renaissance existing in the Rhône valley. Begun under Louis XI, it was terminated under François Premier, when, following upon the Italian wars, it was a place of sojourn for the kings of France.

On entering the portal at the right one comes directly to the Chambre du Tribunal of to-day, its walls panelled with a wonderful series of wood-carvings coming from the ancient Cour des Comptes, the work of a German sculptor, Paul Jude, in 1520.

The portal to the left leads to the Cour d'Appel — the Chambres des Audiences Solennelles — whose ceiling was designed in 1660 by Jean Lepautre, a great decorative artist of the court of Louis XIV, and carved by one Guillebaud, a native of Grenoble. The ancient chapel, or such of it as remains, where the parliament heard mass, is reached through this room. The ancient Chambre des Comptes dates from the reign of Charles VIII.

The Grande Salle on the upper floor is one of the notable works of its epoch with respect to its decorations, though the noble glass of its numerous windows was destroyed long years ago, leaving behind only a record of its magnificently designed *armoiries* and inscriptions.

The chief, out-of-the-ordinary, decorations still to be observed are the sculptured fronts of thirty-eight cupboard doors which enclose the provincial archives. From an artistic, no less than a utilitarian, point of view, they are certainly to be admired, even preferred, before the " elastic " book cases of to-day.

Much of the old Palais des Dauphins' former magnificent attributes in the shape of decorative details remain to charm the eye and senses to-day, but of the extensive range of apartments of former times only a bare three or four suggest by their groinings, carvings and chimney-pieces the splendour with which the elder sons of the kings of France were wont to surround themselves.

A remarkably successful work of restoration of the façade was accomplished within a dozen years on the model of the best of Renaissance details in other parts of the edifice, until to-day the whole presents a most effective ensemble.

In Grenoble's museum is a room devoted to portraits of the good and great of Dauphiny. There are a dozen busts in marble of as many Dauphins, a portrait of Marie Vignon, the wife of Lesdiguières, and a crayon sketch of Bayard, which is the earliest portrait of the " Chevalier " extant. In the Église Saint-Andre is the

tomb of Bayard. The funeral monument surmounting it was erected only in the seventeenth century. The official chapel of the Dauphins has a great rectangular *clocher* remaining to suggest its former proportions. This fine tower is surmounted by an octagonal upper story and is flanked at each corner with a *clocheton* rising hardily into the rarefied atmosphere. The grim tower braves the tempests of winter to-day as it has since 1230.

Grenoble's Hôtel des Trois Dauphins is an historic monument as replete with interest as many of more splendour. It was here that Napoleon lodged, with General Bertrand, on the night when he passed through the city on that eventful return from Elba when he sought to kindle the European war-flame anew.

Grenoble's sole vestige of ancient castle or chateau architecture, aside from the temporary royal abode of the French kings and the Dauphins, is a round tower — La Grosse Tour Ronde — now built into the Hôtel de Ville, the only existing relic of a still earlier Palais des Dauphins which in its time stood upon the site of the ancient Roman remains of a structure built in the days of Diocletian.

Grenoble's citadel possesses to-day only a square tower with *machicoulis* to give it the dis-

tinction of a militant spirit. It was built in 1409, but to-day has been reduced to a mere barrack's accessory of not the slightest military strength, a "*colombier militaire,*" the authorities themselves cynically call it.

Vauban's ancient ramparts have now been turned into a series of those tree-planted promenades so common in France, but the militant aspect of Grenoble is not allowed to be lost sight of, as a mere glance of the eye upward to the hillsides and mountain crests roundabout plainly indicates.

Grenoble, with its fort-crowned hill of "La Bastille," has been called the Ehrenbreitstein of the Isère, a river which has played a momentous part in the history of Savoy and Dauphiny, but which is little known or recognized by those who follow the main lines of French travel.

Mont Rachet forms the underpinning of "La Bastille" and gives a foothold to an old feudal fortress now built around by a more modern work. Below is the juncture of the Isère and the Drac, and the great plain in the midst of which rests the proud old capital of the Dauphins. The site is truly remarkable and the strategic importance of the fortress was well enough made use of in mediæval times as a

feudal stronghold. What its value for military purposes may actually be to-day is another story. The walls of the fortress certainly look grim enough, but it is probable that even the puniest of Alpine mountain batteries could reduce it in short order.

Grenoble, as might be expected of a wealthy provincial capital, is surrounded by a near-by battery of palatial country houses which may well take rank as *chateaux de marque.* Some are modern and some are remodelled from more ancient foundations, but all are of the imposing order which one associates with a mountain retreat. These of course are of a class quite distinct from the countless forts, fortresses, towers and donjons with which the whole countryside is strewn.

Uriage, a near neighbour, is a popular resort in little, in fact, a *ville d'eau,* as the French aptly name such places. The Chateau d'Uriage will for most folk have vastly more sympathetic interest than the semi-invalid attractions of the spa itself. It is at present the property of the Saint Ferreol family, and though not strictly to be reckoned as a sight, since it is not open to the public, it still remains one of the most striking residential chateaux of these parts. It was built by the Seigneurs d'Allemon under

the old régime. Its architecture is frankly of the nondescript order, a mélange of much that is good and some that is bad, but all of it effective when judged from a more or less distant view-point. With respect to its details it is a livid mass of non-contemporary elements to which the purist would give scant consideration, but the effect, always the most desirable quality after all, is undeniably satisfying. The situation heightens this effect, no doubt, but what would you? The high sloped roof, in place of the mansards one usually sees, may be considered an innovation in a structure of its epoch. It was so built, without question, that it might better shed the snows of winter, which here come early and stay late.

The Chateau de Vizille, in a wooded park bordering upon the little industrial suburb of Grenoble bearing the same name, is a most imposing pile, and is fairly reminiscent of its eighteenth century contemporaries in Touraine and elsewhere in mid-France. It was the place of meeting of the États Généraux of Dauphiny in 1788, one of the momentous preambles to the French Revolution, a chapter of the great drama which was vigorously spoken and acted.

It was on July 21, 1788, under the presidency of the Comte de Marges, that were voted the

preliminary paragraphs of the famous "Declaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen." The occasion is perpetuated in memory by a monument erected in the town to "La Gloire de l'Assemblée de Vizille . . . et prepare la Revolution Francaise."

This was the first parliamentary vote against the sustaining of aristocratic hereditary government in favour of popular representation — really the general signal for revolution, a year before the convention at Versailles.

The massive pile, ornate but not burdensome, with its mansards, its towers and terraces, composes with its environment in a most agreeable manner.

Known originally as the Chateau des Lesdiguières, for it was built originally by that celebrated Constable, Vice-Roi du Dauphiné, the Chateau de Vizille was formerly the property of the family of Casimir Perier, that which gave a president to the later Republic.

In the early part of the seventeenth century a German traveller, Abraham Goelnitz, "greatly admired" the chateau, and compared it to that of the Duc d'Epernon at Cadillac, which contained seventy rooms. That of the Maréchal Lesdiguières had a hundred and twenty-five, among them (at that time) a pic-

ture gallery, an arsenal with six hundred suits of armour, two thousand pikes and ten thousand muskets, as the inventory read. No wonder Richelieu would have reduced the power of the local seigneurs when they could get, and keep together, such a store as that.

Vizille abounds in historical memories the most exciting; the very fact that it was the home of Lesdiguières, the terrible companion of the Baron des Adrets — a Dauphinese tyrant, a warrior-pillager and much more that history vouches for — explains this.

"*Viendrez ou je brulerai,*" Lesdiguières wrote to the recalcitrant vassals of his king who originally had a castle on the same site. And when they stepped out, leaving the edifice unharmed, he stepped in and threw it to the ground and built the less militant chateau which one sees to-day. This edifice as it now stands was practically the work of Lesdiguières. The Protestant governor of Dauphiny was reckoned a "sly fox" by the Duc de Savoie, and doubtless with reason. It is a recorded fact of history that the governor built his chateau with the unpaid labour of the neighbouring peasants. This was in conformity with an old custom by which a governor of the Crown could release his subject from taxes by the payment

of a *corvée,* that is, labour for the State. He took it to mean that as the representative of the state the peasants were bound to work for him. And so they did. The charge goes home nevertheless that it was a case of official sinning.

This " Berceau de la Liberté " is in form an elegant pavilion of the style current with Louis XIII. Originally it possessed certain decorative features, statues and bas reliefs, all more or less mutilated to-day. What is left gives an aspect of magnificence, but after all these features are of no very high artistic order. Within, the decoration of the apartments and their furnishings rise to a considerably higher plane. Everywhere may be seen the arms of the Constable, three roses and a lion, the latter rampant, naturally, as becomes the device of a warrior.

The later career of the Chateau de Vizille has been most ignoble. Twice in the last century it suffered by fire, in 1825 and 1865, and finally it was rented as a store-house for a manufacturing concern, later to become a boarding house controlled by a Société Anglaise. Nothing good came of the last project and the enterprise failed, as might have been anticipated at the commencement. To-day the property is on the market, or was until very recently.

CHAPTER XVI

CHAMBÉRY AND THE LAC DU BOURGET

One comes to Chambéry to see the chateau of the Ducs de Savoie, the modest villa "Les Charmettes," celebrated by the sojourn of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Warens, and the Fontaine des Elephants. That is all Chambéry has for those who would worship at picturesque or romantic shrines, save its accessibility to all Savoy.

To begin with the last mentioned attraction first, one may dispose of the Fontaine des Elephants in a word. It has absolutely no artistic or sentimental appeal, though the town residents worship before it as a Buddhist does before Buddha. The ducal splendour of the chateau and of "La Sainte Chapelle," which together form the mass commonly referred to as "the chateau," is indeed the first of Chambéry's attractions. Restorations of various epochs have made of the fabric something that will stand the changes of the seasons for gener-

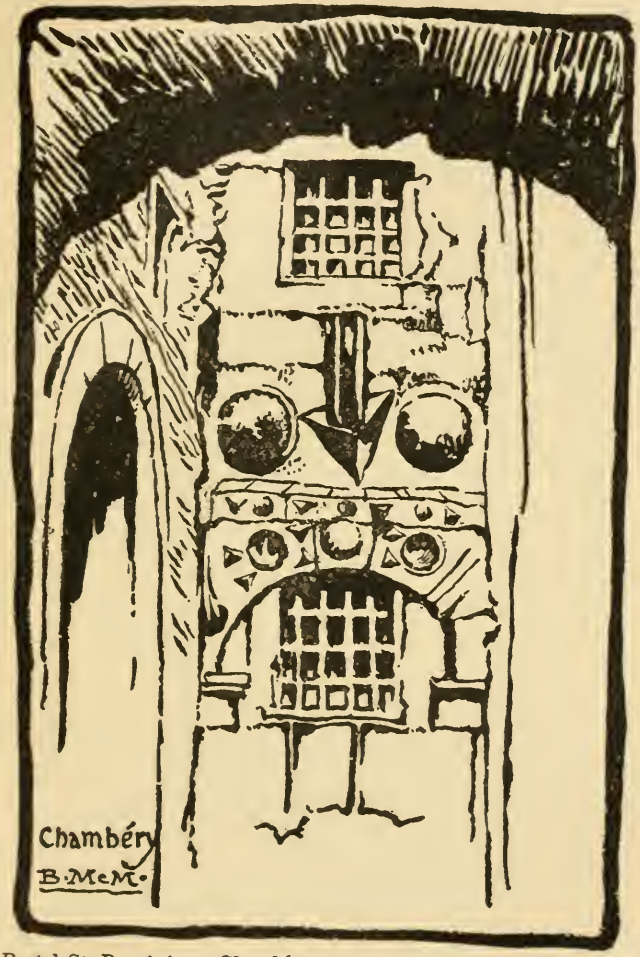
ations yet to come and still preserve its mediæval characteristics. This is saying that the restoration of the Chateau de Chambéry has been intelligently conceived and well executed.

The great portal, preceded by an ornate terrace, with a statue of the Frères de Maistre, is the chief and most splendid architectural detail. A good second is the old portal of the Église Saint Dominique, which has been incorporated into the chateau as has been the Sainte Chapelle. Its chevet and its deep-set windows form the most striking externals of this conglomerate structure.

One of the old towers forms another dominant note when viewed from without, but let no one who climbs to its upper platform for a view of the classic panorama of the city and its surroundings think that he, or she, treads the stones where trod lords and ladies of romantic times, for the stairway is a poor modern thing bolstered up by iron rods, as unlovely as a fire-escape ladder on an apartment house, and no more romantic.

It was in the Chateau de Chambéry that was consummated the final ceremony by which Savoy was made an independent duchy in 1416. Historians of all ranks have described the magnificence of the event in no sparing

Portal of the Chateau de Chambéry



Portal St. Dominique, Chambéry

terms. It was the most gorgeous spectacle ever played upon the stage of which this fine old mediæval castle was the theatre.

The final act of the ceremony took place before a throng of princes, prelates and various seigneurs and minor vassals of all the neighbouring kingdoms and principalities. The Emperor Sigismond, Amadée VIII, who was to be the new duke, dined alone upon a raised dais in the Grande Salle, and the service was made by "a richly dressed throng of seigneurs mounted on brilliantly caparisoned chargers." This is quoted from a historical chronicle, which however neglects to state the quality of the service. It is quite possible that it may not have been above reproach.

Here, a couple of centuries later, another Victor-Amadée married the Princesse Henriette, Duchesse d'Orléans. The bride to be had never met her future husband until they came together at a little village near-by, as she was journeying to the Savoyan castle for the ceremony. Says the chronicle: "When the princess saw the pageant, at the head of which marched Victor-Amadée, the fair young man of distinguished and martial bearing, without a moment's hesitation, casting to the winds all her previous instruction in matters of etiquette,

Chateau de Chambéry

she flew down the stairs and into the street and finally into the arms of the duke."

The marriage was not, however, a happy one. The duke became disloyal to his vows and left his wife to pine and moan away her days in the ducal chateau whilst he went off campaigning for other hearts and lands. He acquired Sicily, and became the first King of Sicily and Sardinia, and paved the way for the future greatness of his house, but this was not accomplished by adherence to the code of marital constancy.

The Chateau de Chambéry was finally abandoned definitely by the Savoyan dukes, who, when they became also monarchs of Sardinia, took up their residence at Turin. The "*beaux jours*" had passed never to return. Henceforth its career was to be less brilliant, for it but rarely received even passing visits from its masters. In 1745 it was considerably damaged by fire; in 1775 it was, in a way, furbished up and put in order for the marriage of Charles Emmanuel and Madame Clotilde of France, but again, in 1798, it was ravaged by fire.

From 1793 to 1810 the chateau was the headquarters of the officialdom of the newly formed Département du Mont Blanc, and in 1860 it was used as the Préfecture of the Département de la Savoie. Napoleon III, journeying this way in

1860, decided to make it an imperial residence and certain transformations to that end were undertaken, but it never came to real distinction again, save that it exists as an admirable example of a " monument historique " of the old régime.

It was on the esplanade, beneath the windows of the chateau, that Amadée VI won the title of the Comte Vert, because of the preponderant colours of his arms and costume in a tournament which was held here in 1348.

The third of Chambéry's classic sights, " Les Charmettes," is the " delicious habitation " rendered so celebrated by Rousseau. One arrives at " Les Charmettes " by a discreet and shady by-path. It has been preserved quite in its primitive state and is devoid of any pretence whatever. Its charm is idealistic, romantic and intimate. Nothing grandiose has place here. It is a simple two-story, sloping tiled-roof habitation of the countryside. As the " Confessions " puts it, " Les Charmettes " was discovered thus: *" Apres avoir un peu cherché nous nous fixâmes au Charmettes . . . à la porte de Chambéry, mais retirée et solitaire, comem si l'on en était à cent lieus."*

This dwelling where Jean Jacques passed so many of his *" rares bons jours "* of his adven-

turous life has been bought by the city, and will henceforth be guarded as a public monu-

ment, a tourist shrine like the Chateau des Ducs and La Grande Chartreuse. Here Madame de

Warens will reign again in the effigy of a reproduction of Quentin de la Tour's famous portrait, possessed of that "*air caressant et tendre*" and "*sourire angelique*" which so captured the author of the "Confessions." Arthur Young, that observant English agriculturalist, who travelled so extensively in France, paid a warm tribute to Rousseau's good fairy when he wrote: "There was something so amiable in her character that in spite of her frailties her name rests among those few memories connected with us by ties more easily felt than described."

In one of his stories Alphonse Daudet tells us of a *bourgeois* who had purchased an old chateau, and was driven away from it by the ghosts of the family which had preceded him as proprietors. Surely something of the same kind might have happened to that citizen of the United States who proposed to transport "Les Charmettes" to Chicago. The offer was declined and that is how the city of Chambéry came to possess it for all time. It is well that this took place, for there is hardly a house in Europe in which one would imagine that the ghosts of history would so persistently survive.

Not only was "Les Charmettes" and Madame de Warens connected so intimately,

but they were also associated with another name less known in the world of letters. Hear what the " Confessions " has to say:

" He was a young man from Viaud; his father, named Vintzinried, was a self-styled captain of the Chateau de Chillon on Lac Leman. The son was a hair-dresser's assistant and was running about the world in that quality when he came to present himself to Madame de Warens, who received him well, as she did all travellers, and especially those from her own country. He was a big, dull blond, well-made enough, his face insipid, his intelligence the same, speaking like a beautiful Leander . . . vain, stupid, ignorant, insolent." For the rest one is referred to the " Confessions."

Within a radius of fifty kilometres of Chambéry there are more than thirty historic chateaux or fortresses of the middle ages and the Renaissance. Many are in an admirable, if not perfect, state of preservation, and all offer something of historic and artistic interest, though manifestly not all can be included in a rush across France. This fact is patent; that a picturesquely disposed and imposing castle or chateau adds much to the pleasing aspect of a landscape, and here in this land of mountain peaks and smiling valleys the prospect is as

varied as one could hope to find. Built often on a mountain slope — and as often on a mountain peak — frequently within sight of one another, the dwellers therein would have been glad of some means of " wireless " communication between their houses, for not always were the seigneurs at war with their neighbours.

Off to the southward, towards Saint Michel de Maurienne, is one of the most conspicuous of these hill-top chateaux. Chignin is still the proud relic of an ancient chateau which is a land-mark for miles around. It has no history worth recounting, but is as much like the conventional Rhine castle of reality and imagination as any to be seen away from the banks of that turgid stream. On a lofty eminence are four great towers to remind one of the more extensive structure to which they were once connected. These ruins, and another rebuilt tower of the old chateau of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are now practically all devoted to the religious usages of the Chartreux, but in spite of this they present a militant aspect such as one usually associates with things secular.

The round of Lac Bourget, which environs Chambéry on the north, suggests many historic souvenirs of the dukes and the days when they held their court at the Chateau de Chambéry.

Chateau de Chignin

Between Chambéry and Aix-les-Bains, just beside that wide dusty road along which scorch the twentieth century *nouveau riche,* who with their villas and gigantic hotels have all but spoiled this idyllic corner of old Europe, rise the walls of the Chateau de Montagny, captured in 1814 by the allied armies marching against France, and which still conserves, embedded in its portal, a great shot, one of a broadside which finally battered in its door. If one would see war-like souvenirs still more barbarous, a cast of the eye off towards Montmélian and Miolans will awaken even more bloody ones. Their story is told elsewhere in these pages.

At Bourget du Lac, a dozen kilometres out, are the ruins of the Chateau de Bourget, within sight of the ancient Lacus Castilion, and a near neighbour of the celebrated Abbey of Hautecombe.

Comte Amé V was born in the Chateau de Bourget in 1249. It had previously belonged to the Seigneur de la Rochette, and during the thirteenth century was occupied continually by the princes of the house of Savoy. As may be judged by all who view, its site was most ravishing, and though one may not even imagine what its architectural display may actually have been it is known that Amé V bestowed

much care and wealth upon it when he came to man's estate. A pupil of Giotto's was brought from Italy to superintend the decorations, and evidences have been found in the ruined tower at the right of the present heap of ruins which suggest some of the decorative splendour which the building one day possessed. In spite of its fragmentary condition the ruin of the Chateau de Bourget is one of the most romantically disposed souvenirs of its era in Savoy, and one may well echo the words of a local poet who has praised it with all sincerity.

" O lac, te souvient-il . . . . des beaux jours du vieux castel."

The chronicles, too, have much to say of the brilliant succession of seigneurs who came to visit the Comtes de Savoie here in their wild-wood retreat, " a line of counts as noble, rich and powerful as sovereigns of kingdoms."

The sepulchre of the Savoyan counts in the old Abbey of Hautecombe must naturally form a part of any pilgrimage to the neighbouring chateau. For no reason whatever can it be neglected by the visitor to these parts, the less so by the chateau-worshipper just because it is a religious foundation. It is in fact the mausoleum of the princes of the house of Savoy. Within its walls are buried various members

Abbey of Hautecombe

of the dynasty who would have made of it the Valhalla of their time.

"Il est un coin de terre, au pied d'une montagne
Que baigne le lac du Bourget
. . . . . .
Hautecombe! port calme! O royal monastere!
Abri des fils de Saint Bernard."

At the extreme northerly end of the Lac du Bourget is the ancient Manoir de Châtillon, sitting high on an isolated and wooded hillside above the gently lapping waters, and in full view of the snow-capped mountains of the Alpine chain to the eastward.

Here was born, towards the end of the twelfth century, Geoffroi de Châtillon, son of Jean de Châtillon and Cassandra Cribelli, sister of Pope Urban III. In every way the edifice is an ideally picturesque one, as much so because of its site and its historical foundation. As an architectural glory it is a mélange of many sorts, with scarce a definite æsthetic attribute. It is as an historical guide-post that it appears in its best light. Its chief deity, Geoffroi, became a canon and chancellor of the chapter at Milan; later he entered the religious retreat of Hautecombe, from which Gregory IX finally drew him forth to make him a cardinal-bishop.

He ultimately succeeded to the pontifical robes and tiara himself as Celestin IV (1241). He died eighteen days later, poisoned, it is said, so his reign at the head of Christendom was perhaps the briefest on record.

Bordeau, another ruined memory of mediævalism, also overlooks the Lac du Bourget from near-by.

Aix-les-Bains is of course the lode-stone which draws the majority of travellers to this corner of the world. It is but a city of pleasure, a modern "Spa," the outgrowth of another of Roman times when they took "*cures*" more seriously. It has the reputation to-day, among those who are really in the whirl of things, as being the gayest, if not the most profligate — and there is some suspicion of that — watering place in Europe. Judging from prices alone, and admitting the disposition or willingness of those who would be gay to pay high prices without a murmur, this is probably so.

The site of Aix-les-Bains is lovely, and its waters really beneficial — so the doctors say, and probably with truth. Its Casino is only second to that of Monte Carlo.

The chief charm of Aix-les-Bains after all is, or ought to be, its accessibility to the historic masterpieces roundabout, and its delightful sit-

uation by the shores of the "*lac bleu*" whose praises were so loudly sung by Lamartine in "Raphael."

North from Chambéry and east from Aix-les-Bains, is a mountain region known as Les Bauges, a little known and less exploited region. It is a charming isolated corner of Savoy, where once roamed the gorgeous equipages of the Ducs de Savoie, who here hunted the wild boar, the deer and the bears and foxes to their hearts' content. To-day pretty much all game of this nature has disappeared, save an occasional *sanglier,* or wild boar, which, when met with, usually turns tail and runs.

Midway in this mountain land between Aix-les-Bains and Albertville is Le Chatelard, a tiny townlet on the banks of a mountain torrent, the Chéran. On a hill above the town, at a height of nearly three thousand feet above the sea level, are the insignificant remains of the chateau of Thomas de Savoie. Scant remains they are to be sure, endowed with a history as scant, since little written word is to be met with concerning them.

Otherwise the chateau is a very satisfactory historical monument.

After climbing a tortuous winding path one comes suddenly upon a great walled barrier

through which opens a door on which is to be read:

ON EST PRIE
DE FERMER LES
PORTES
(J'exige).

The last line is delicious. Of course one would close the doors after the mere intimation that it was desired that they should be closed. The proprietor says that he demands it, but he takes no measures to see that his demands are carried out. What pretence! All the same the pilgrimage is worth the making, but it's not an easy jaunt.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE SHADOW OF LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE

One may leave Rousseau's smiling valley above Chambéry and journey to Grenoble via La Grande Chartreuse, or by the valley of the Isère, as fancy dictates. In either case one should double back and cover the other route or much will otherwise be missed that will be regretted.

Grenoble is militant from heel to toe. Its garrison is of vast numbers, soldiers of all ranks and all arms are everywhere, and every hill round-about bristles with a fortification or a battery of masked guns.

Every foot of the region is historic ground, and whether one crosses from Savoy to Dauphiny or from Dauphiny to Savoy the borderland is at all times reminiscent of the historic past.

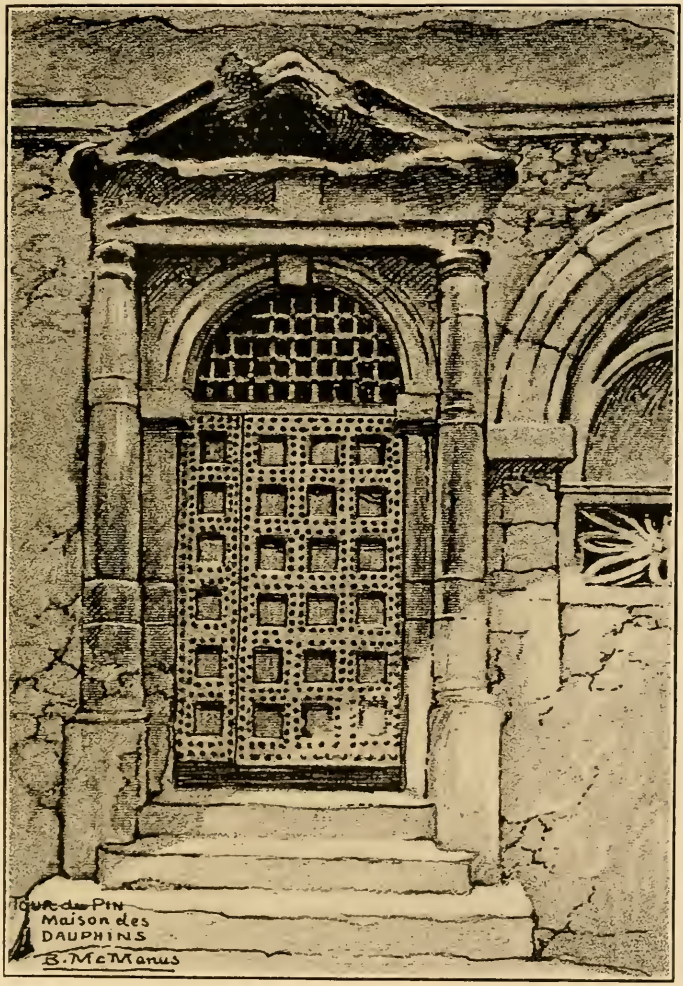
The cradle of the Dauphin princes of France is not only a region of mountains and valleys, but it is a land where a numerous and warlike

nobility was able to withstand invaders and oppressors to the last. Like Scotland, Dauphiny was never conquered; at least it lost no measure of its original independence by its alliances until it was cut up into the present-day departments of modern France.

Dauphiny is possessed of multiple aspects. It has the sun-burnt character of Provence in the south, with Montelimar and Grignan as its chief centres; it has its *coteaux* and *falaises*, like those of Normandy, around Crest and Die; and its "Petite Hollande" neighbouring upon Tour-de-Pin where the Dauphins once had a gem of a little rest-house which still exists to-day. The mountains of Dauphiny rival the Alps of Switzerland — the famous Barre des Écrins is only a shade less dominant than Mont Blanc itself.

The chief singer of the praises of Dauphiny has ever been Lamartine. No one has pictured its varied aspects better.

"L'œil embrasse au matin l'horizon qu'il domine
Et regarde, à travers les branches de noyer,
Les eaux bleuir au loin et la plaine ondoyer.
. . . . . .
On voit à mille pieds au dessous de leurs branches
La grande plaine bleue avec ses routes blanches
Les moissons jaunes d'or, les bois comme un point noir,
L'Isère renvoyant le ciel comme un miroir."



Maison des Dauphins, Tour-de-Pin

The very topographical aspect of Dauphiny has bespoken romance and chivalry at all times. The mass of La Grande Chartreuse was dedicated to religious devotion, but those of other mountain chains, and the plains and valleys lying between, were strewn with castle towers and donjons almost to the total exclusion of church spires.

Coming south from Chambéry by the valley of the Graisivaudan, by the side of the rushing waters of the Isère hurrying on its way to join the greater Rhône at Valence, the point of view is manifestly one which suggests feudalism in all its militant glory, rather than the recognition of the fact that it is overshadowed by the height of La Grande Chartreuse, whose influences were wholly dissimilar.

It was the valley of Graisivaudan that Louis XII rather impulsively called the most beautiful garden of France: "*charmé par la divinité de ses plantements et les tours en serpentant qu'y fait la rivière Isère.*"

Stendhal, too, compared it to the finest valleys of Piedmont. One may differ, but it is a very beautiful prospect indeed which opens out from Barraux or Pontcharra, midway between Grenoble and Chambéry.

Near Pontcharra is the Chateau Bayard,

where was born and lived the famous "*Chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche.*" As an historic monument of rank its position is pre-eminent, though not much can be said of its architectural pretence. Still here it is, on the route from Grenoble to Gap by the famous Col. Bayard, also celebrated in history, almost as much so as the famous Breche de Roland in the Pyrenees.

It was through this cleft in the mountain that Napoleon marched on that eventful journey from Golfe Jouan to Paris in the attempt to rise again to power. It was not far from the crest, the pass between the two principal valleys of the French Alps, that Napoleon made the first important additions to the few followers who had gathered around him on his doubtful journey. The troops sent out from Grenoble opposed his progress, whereupon he advanced towards them, bareheaded and alone, and demanded to know if they, his former fellows in arms, would kill their leader. Not one of them would fire, though the order was actually given. With one common inspiration they went over to him *en masse,* with the classic cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and continued their way towards the capital, where, just before Grenoble, they were also joined by the forces

of Labedoyère, with their colonel at their head, sent out to stop them.

On the shores of the Grand Lac de Laffrey, as the marvellous mountain road swings by on its *corniche,* one notes a marble tablet on which is carven the following words, which are quite worth copying down. No further explanatory inscription is to be seen, simply the words:

"*Soldats! Je suis votre Empereur. Ne me reconnaissez vous pas! S'il en est un parmi vous qui veuille tuer son general, me voila!*" (7 Mars 1815.)

In spite of the significance of the words the driver of a cart going the same way as ourselves professed an utter ignorance of their meaning. Passing strange, this, but true! Is it for this that history is written?

The ruins of the Chateau de Bayard sit imposingly on a height commanding a wide-spread panorama of the valley below, and the distant barrier of mountain peaks on every side. The walls and turrets are mouldering to-day, as they have been for generations, but local historians and antiquarians have on more than one occasion written of the rooms and gardens where strolled and played the youthful warrior, and acquired the principles which afterwards led to so great a fame.

Of the ancient chateau of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, where (1476-1524) was born the Chevalier Bayard, but a crumbling portal and tower remain sufficiently well preserved to suggest the dignity it once had. They attach themselves to two minor structures, one of which was probably the chapel, and the other, perhaps, the Salle des Gardes. Within the walls which enclose the latter are also the apartments which were occupied by the warrior-knight in his youth, doubtless the same as that in which his mother, Helene Alleman, gave him birth. The guardian claims all this, and, since this is what you come to see, you accept the assertion gratefully, though history itself vouches for nothing so precise.

A bridge which crosses the river Breda at this point has on its parapet an equestrian statue representing the infant Bayard. The "bon chevalier" was descended from a local lord who bore the name of Bayart, but some careless chronicler changed the final consonant of Aymon Terrail's title (Seigneur de Bayart), and the name of his better known progeny has thus gone to history.

The family was of antique extraction; "of a noble and antique chivalry," as one learns from the old historians of Dauphiny. "The

prowess of a Terrail " has passed into a local proverb. So the infant Terrail who was to become the future Bayard came to his glorious calling by good right. At the age of six or seven the young Terrail went to live with his uncle, Bishop of Grenoble, but at twelve returned to the paternal chateau, where his inclinations became the *" plus belliqueuses,"* whereas, before, his infant predilections were of a studious kind. Henceforth he was for war, and he came rightly enough by his liking, for one of his ancestors, Philippe Terrail, died gloriously at Poitiers, another at Crécy, another at Verneuil and another, already known as " Épée Terrail " to the English, died at the side of Louis XI.

Young Pierre was asked by his father (1487) what profession he would adopt, and it was then that he replied that the war spirit was bred in him and that he would never renounce it. His uncle, the bishop, presented him to the Duc Charles de Savoie, who was holding court at the moment at Chambéry, and by his mere riding up on his horse before the duke, he was immediately accepted as a page of his suite.

Opposite Pontcharra, on the opposite bank of the Isère, is the comparatively modern Fort Barraux, which looks far more ideally pictur-

esque than the historic castle of the Bayards. History has not been silent with regard to the fortifying of these mountain peaks of Dauphiny and Savoy. The fortress was first built on this site by Charles Emmanuel, Duc de Savoie, though an opposing army was drawn up before him under the command of the celebrated Connetable Lesdiguières. Being reproved by his king, Henri IV, for his dilatoriness in allowing the enemy to so entrench itself whilst he and his men stood idly by, the Connetable sagaciously and brilliantly replied, "Your Majesty has need of a fortress on the Savoyan side to hold in check that of Montmélian, and since Charles Emmanuel has been good enough to commence the building of one, let us wait until it is finished." The wait was not long, and the completed fortress, after a very slight struggle, came to the French king.

The remarkable feudal Chateau de Rochefort-en-Montagne, above Pontcharra, is a ruin scarcely equalled, as a ruin, by any other above ground to-day. It has a majestic sadness and appeal, crumbled and dishonoured though it is.

To paint the picture one must hold the brush himself. Little satisfaction can be got from the contemplation of another's sketch of this noble

ruin. Grand and imposing it is, however, though but a mere echo of the splendid edifices of the Renaissance in the Loire valley, and yet its firm, flat ground plan, its massive portal and its massive round tower are all reminiscent of the best of the Renaissance castle builder's art. The point should be recognized nevertheless that it is of the mountain and not of the plain. This will account for many of its vagaries of detail as compared with the more familiar chateaux of the Loire.

The surroundings are varied and beautiful, and the grim gaunt drabness of the proud old walls give at once a note of melancholy memory which sounds perhaps the stronger because this fine old feudal monument is but a shell as compared contrastingly with the better preserved examples of its era to be seen in mid-France.

The property belongs to-day to the Rochefort-Lucay family, of which Henri Rochefort, the publicist, is best known. It is not, however, habitable in any sense, but it could be made so with a more reasonable expenditure than one usually puts into a great country house, so let us hope that its fortunes will some day come into their own again.

Just below Grenoble are Sassenage and Saint

Donat, quite unknown and unworshipped. They deserve a better fame. Sassenage, but six kilometres from Grenoble, is what the French call "*propre, riant*" and "*aise.*" It is all this, as a round of a fortnight's excursions in different directions, in and out of Grenoble, proved to us. There is nothing else quite in its class, and its chateau is a wonderfully chiselled sermon in stone, as its portal and façade demonstrate readily enough to the most casual observer. A most curious emblem is here to be noted. It is worthy of being added to those carved porcupines and salamanders of Louis XII and François Premier. In this case it is a mythological, or traditional, figure, half woman and half snake, and possessed of two tails. It is a most unpleasant architectural decoration and perpetuates the mythical character of a local legend. One is glad to know that it is not an emblem personal to the family of the present owner.

Some kilometres to the south is the Tour Sans Venin, one of the ancient wonders of Dauphiny, though it is little more than a single flank of wall to-day. The natives, skeptical when they first heard the tale of Roland the Paladin, built the edifice of which this wall formed a part, and built it of wonderful stone,


La TOUR
Sans VENIN

or earth, warranted to chase away reptiles and vermin. Imagination, no doubt, played its part, but one can readily enough accept the properties as desirable ones for a building material to possess.

Saint Donat, still further down the valley, has hardly a memory for one save that he remembers having heard of it in connection with the rather merry life of Diane de Poitiers. Today it is nothing but a no-account little Dauphinese village. It is not even a railway junction. It has however an old mill built up out of an old *rendezvous de chasse* where the fickle Diane had more than one escapade. Like many another old ruin of Dauphiny the Chateau de Saint Donat is reminiscent of the local manner of building. It is nothing luxurious, but massive, and, withal, a seemingly efficient stronghold for the time in which it was built, or would have been had it ever been called upon to serve its purpose to the full. It seems a fatal destiny that a chateau should be no longer a chateau, for here in Dauphiny no inconsiderable number of mediæval dwellings of this class have been turned into factories of one sort or another. Here in the *salles* and *chambres,* as the apartments are still named on the spot, are machines and workmen spinning silk and weaving ribbons

for the great Paris department stores. The Chambre de Diane, however, is still preserved as a show-place in much the same manner in which it was originally conceived. It is a circular apartment, rather daringly attached to the main building. A sort of alcove, or addition, is built out into the open still further, and one only reaches it by three steps up from the floor. Three secret doors separate the sleeping apartment itself from the connecting corridor. If there is anything of the sentiment of the enchanting huntress Diane hanging about the apartment to-day one quite forgets it by reason of its being drowned out by the noise of the whirring mill-wheels below.

The twentieth century is far from the time when romance dwelt in purling brooks or stalked through marble halls. "Other days, other ways" is a trite saying which applies as well to chateaux as other things. To-day, in Dauphiny in particular, a purling brook or a mountain torrent is more valued for its "*force motrice*" than for any other virtues, and a chateau that can be readily transformed into a silk-mill is a better business proposition than would be its value as a ruin. This is the practical, if sad, point of view.

There are no coal mines in Dauphiny, but the

houille blanche, as the French call water-power, is a product highly valued. Sentiment and romance are apt to be little valued in comparison.

CHAPTER XVIII

ANNECY AND LAC LEMAN

The immediate environs of the Lac du Bourget, the Lac d'Annecy and the French shores of Lac Leman, — more popularly known to the world of tourism as the Lake of Geneva — offer a succession of picturesque sights and scenes, presented always with a historic accompaniment that few who have come within the spell of their charms will ever forget.

It is not that these Savoyan lakes are more beautiful than any others; it is not that they are grander; nor is it that they are particularly "unspoiled," considering them from a certain point of view, for in the season they are very much visited by the French themselves and loved accordingly. The charm which makes them so attractive lies in the blend of the historic past with the modernity of the twentieth century. The mélange is less offensive here than in most other places, and their contrasting of the old and the new, the historic and the ro-

mantic, with the modern ways and means of travel and accessibility, gives this mountain lakeland an unusual appeal.

On almost every side are the modern appointments of great hotels; there are " good roads " everywhere for the automobilist, and the main lines of railway crossing France to Italy give an accessibility and comfortable manner of approach which is not excelled by the region of the Swiss and Italian lakes themselves.

Annecy, the metropolis of these parts, has an old chateau that is much better conserved than that of Chambéry so far as the presentation of it as a whole is concerned. It is more nearly a perfect unit, and less of a conglomerate restoration than the former.

The Chateau d'Annecy was the ancient residence of the Comtes de Genevois, but in 1401 the seigniory passed to the house of Savoy. Robert de Geneve, known to ecclesiastical history as Pope Clement VII, the first of the Avignon Popes, was born here in 1342.

The military history of the Chateau d'Annecy is intimately bound up with that of the town because of the fact that as a matter of protection the first settlement grouped itself confidingly around the walls which sheltered the seigneurial presence. Populace and the guar-

dians of the chateau together were thus enabled to throw off the troops which turned back on Annecy after the defeat at Conflans in 1537, but no resistance whatever was made to Henri IV and his followers, who entered without a blow being dealt, and " found the inhabitants agreeable and warm of welcome." This was perhaps a matter of mood; it might not have so happened the day before or the day after, but their cordiality was certainly to the credit of all concerned from a humane point of view, whatever devotees of the war-game may think.

In 1630 Comte Louis de Sales commanded the chateau when the Maréchal de Chatillon marched against it. The besieged made a stiff fight and only capitulated after being able to make such terms as practically turned defeat into victory. On the morrow the Comte de Sales escorted his troops to the Chateau de Conflans, " with all the honours of war."

After a brilliant career of centuries the ancient residence of the Comtes de Genevois, and the Princes de Savoie-Nemours who came after, has become a barracks for a battalion of Chasseurs Alpins. Fortunately for the æsthetic proprieties, it has lost nothing of its seigneurial aspect of old as have so many of its contemporaries when put to a similar use.

Really, Annecy's chateau, its well lined walls, its ramparts and towers, and above all, its situation, close to the water's edge, where the ensemble of its fabric mingles so well with artistically disposed foreground, has an appeal possessed by but few structures of its class.

If one would see the town and lake of Annecy at their best they should be viewed of a September afternoon, when the oblique rays of the autumn sun first begin to gild the heavy square towers of the ancient chateau of the Ducs de Nemours. Behind rise the roofs and spires of the town set off with the reddish golden leaves of the chestnuts of La Puya. All is a blend of the warm colouring of the southland with the sterner, more angular outlines of the north. The contrasting effect is to be remarked. To the left, regarding the town from the water's edge, or better yet from a boat upon the lake, rises the Villa de la Tour, where died Eugene Sue; and farther away the Grange du Hameau de Chavoires, where lingered for a time Jean Jacques Rousseau. All around, through the chestnut woods, are scattered glistening *villas* and *manoirs* and *granges,* with, away off in the distance, the towering walls of the feudal Chateau de Saint Bernard.

Another marvellous silhouette to be had from

the bosom of the lake is midway along the western shore, where the ramparts of Tournette and the crenelated walls of the Dents du Lanfont and Charbonne are, after midday, lighted up as with yellow fire. The brown and yellow roof and façade of an old Benedictine convent, now become a hotel, rise above the verdure of the foreshore, and the whole is as tranquil as if the twentieth century were yet to be born.

On the opposite shore of the lake is the Chateau de Duingt, with its white towers piercing the sky in quite the idyllic manner.

The Chateau de Duingt is a pretentious country residence belonging to the Genevois family which in the seventeenth century gave a bishop to the neighbourhood, a bishop, it is true, who was excommunicated and shorn of all his rights by the Comte de Savoie, Amadée V, but a bishop nevertheless.

The environs of the Lac d'Annecy have ever been a retreat for litterateurs and artist folk. Ernest Renan lodged here in the *hôtellerie* of the famous Abbey, where he occupied a *chambre de prieur.* José-Maria Héredia came here in company with Taine; Ferdinand Fabre passed many months here in an isolated little house on the very shores of the lake; Albert Besnard, the painter, has recently built a studio here,

and a quaint and altogether charming villa; Paul Chabas, too, has resorted hither recently for the same purpose, and indeed scores have found out this accessible but tranquil little corner of Savoy. Another Parisian, a Monsieur Noblemaire, has acquired the picturesque Savoyard Manoir de Thoron, built sometime during the seventeenth century, and lives indeed the life of a noble under the old régime amid the very same luxuriant and agreeable surroundings.

Faverges, at the lower end of the Lac d'Annecy, backed up by the sombre Forêt de Doussard, and in plain view of the snowy top of Mont Blanc off to the eastward, is at once a *ville industrielle* and a reminiscent old feudal town. Its interest is the more entrancing because of the contrasting elements which go to make up its architectural aspect and the life of its present day inhabitants. A mediæval chateau elbows a modern silk factory, and the idle gossip of the workers as they take their little walks abroad on the little *Place* blends strangely enough with the amorous escapades of Henri IV which still live in local legend.

On the road from Faverges to Thone, by the switch-back mountain road, following the valley of the Fier, is the Manoir de la Tour, where

on a fine mid-summer morning in 1730 Jean Jacques Rousseau climbed a cherry tree and bombarded the coquettish Mademoiselle Graffeny and Mademoiselle Galley with the rich, ripe — not overripe — fruit. We know this because Jean Jacques himself said so, and for that reason this little human note makes a pilgrimage hither the pleasurable occupation that it is. The fine old manor is still intact. But the cherry tree? No one knows. May be it was a mythical cherry tree like that of the George Washington legend. In spite of this the guardian will show visitors many cherry trees, and one may take his choice.

Lac Leman is commonly thought a Swiss lake, as is Mont Blanc usually referred to as a Swiss mountain — which it isn't. A good third of the shore line of Lac Leman is French — "*Leman Français,*" it is called.

Practically the whole southern, or French, shore of the Lake of Geneva — or Lake Leman, as we had best think of it since it is thus known to European geographers — is replete with a fascinating appeal which the Swiss shore entirely lacks. It is difficult to explain this, but it is a fact.

The region literally bristles with old castle walls and donjons, though their histories have

not in every instance been preserved, nor have they always been so momentous as to have impressed themselves vividly in the minds of the general reader or the conventional traveller. Perhaps they are all the more charming for that. The writer thinks they are.

Mont Blanc dominates the entire region on the east, and may be considered the good genius of Savoy and Upper Dauphiny, as it is of French-speaking Switzerland and the high Alpine valleys of Italy.

The French shore of Lac Leman, the Département of Haute-Savoie, is cut off from Geneva by the neutral Pays de Gex, and from Switzerland on the east by the torrent of the Morge, just beyond Saint Gingolph. For fifty-two kilometres stretches this French shore, or the "Côte de la Savoie" as the Swiss call it, and its whole extent is as romantic and fair a land as it is possible to conceive.

One may come from Geneva by boat; that indeed is the ideal way to make one's entrance to Haute Savoie, unless one rolls in over the superb roads comfortably ensconced on the soft cushions of a luxurious automobile, a procedure which is commonly thought to be unromantic, but which, it is the belief of the writer, is the only way of knowing well the highways and

byways of a beloved land, always excepting, of course, the ideal method of walking. Not many will undertake the latter, least of all the stranger tourist, who, perforce, is hurried on his way by insistent conditions over which he really has but little control. Walking tours have been made with pleasure and profit in Switzerland before now; the suggestion is made that the thing be attempted on the " Côte de la Savoie " sometime and see what happens.

One should leave the Geneva boat at Hermance, the last Swiss station on the west. After that, one is on French soil. Touges is a simple landing place, but rising high above the greenswarded banks are the donjon and imposing gables of the Chateau de Beauregard belonging to the Marquis Leon Costa. It is in a perfect state of conservation. It was here that was born, in 1752, Marquis Joseph Costa, a celebrated historian, whose fame rests principally on a work entitled " Comment l'Education des Femmes Peut-elle Rendre les Hommes Meilleurs? " This is considered an all-absorbing question even to-day.

At Nernier is a charming souvenir of Lamartine. It was here he lodged in 1815, in a humble thatched cottage — one of the few in France, one fancies, as they are seldom seen —

at a franc a day, "*la table et le couvert compris.*" There are some artists and literary folk living cheaply in France to-day, but the *pension* is not nearly as *bon marché* as that.

A little farther on, beyond the green hillside of Boisy, is the tiny Savoyan city of Yvoire, with a great square mass of an old chateau, now moss-grown and more or less crumbled with age.

Near-by are Excevenex, Sciez and the magnificently environed Chateau de Coudrée, surrounded by a leafy park, a veritable royal domain in aspect.

Back a few kilometres from the shore of the lake is Douvaine, about midway between Geneva and Thonon. Here is the ancient Chateau de Troches,on the very limits of the Comté de Genevois, to the seigneurs of which house it formerly belonged. It served many times as the meeting place of the Princes of Savoy, and has been frequently cited in the historical chronicles.

In 1682 Victor Amadée II made Troches and Douvaine a barony in favour of François Marie Antoine Passerat, whose family were originally of Lucca in Italy. The descendants of the same family have held the property until very recent times, perhaps hold it to-day.

Throughout this region of the Chablais, as it is known, on towards Thonon, and beyond, are numerous well preserved chateaux (*chateaux débout* the French appropriately call them in distinction to the ruined chateaux which abound in even greater numbers), and others, here and there arising a crumbled wall or tower above the dense foliage of the hillsides round about. Certain of these old manors and chateaux of the Genevois, the Chablais and Faucigny have, in recent years, after centuries of comparative ruin, taken on new life as country houses and " villas " of commoners — as sad a fall for a proud chateau as to become a barracks or a poorhouse if the transformations have not been undertaken in good taste. Still others remain at least as undefiled memories of the *chateaux orgueilleux* of other days. A remodelled, restored chateau of the middle ages may be sympathetic and appealing, but the work must be well done and all *art nouveau* instincts suppressed.

There are other examples which have been allowed to tumble to actual ruin, mere heaps of stones without form or outline, and others, like Allinges, La Rochette, De la Roche and Faucigny, possessing only a crumbling tower perched upon a height which dominates the

valley and the plain below and tell only the story of their former greatness by suggestion. Chiefly however these can be classed as nothing more pretentious than ruins.

Thonon-les-Bains, midway along the extent of the French shore, is renowned as a "*ville d'eau.*" In all ways it quite rivals many of the Swiss stations on the opposite shore. It sits high on a sheaf of rock, the first buttresses of the Alps, and enjoys a wide-spread view extending to the other shore, and beyond to the Swiss Jura and the Bernese Oberland.

A dainty esplanade shaded with lindens is the chief thoroughfare and centre of life of this attractive little lakeside resort. Here once stood an old chateau of the Ducs de Savoie. The court frequently repaired thither because of the purity of the air and the altogether delightful surroundings. It was one of the later line of dukes who exploited the mineral springs which have given Thonon its latter-day renown.

Back of Thonon rises a curiously disposed table-land known as the Colline des Allinges. It alternates bare rock with a heather-like vegetation in a colouring as wonderful as any artist's palette could conceive. The ruins of two fortress-chateaux crown the height of the plateau, one coming down from a period of great

antiquity, whilst the other is of more recent date, with a well preserved portal and a drawbridge. Within the precincts of this latter are still to be seen the ruins of a chapel rich in memories of Saint François-de-Sales, who spent a considerable part of his apostleship here in the Chablais. To-day, the old chateau and its chapel are a place of pious pilgrimage, but with the piety left out it is the chief and most popular excursion for mere sight-seers coming out from Thonon. This mere fact does not, however, detract from its historic, religious and romantic significance, so let no one omit it for that reason.

The Chateau de Ripaille, beyond Thonon towards Évian, is a grander shrine by far. It was the retreat of a Duc de Savoie who was finally withdrawn from his hiding place that he might be crowned with the papal tiara. The incident is historically authenticated, and the very substantial remains of the old chateau to-day — monumental even — make it one of the most interesting shrines of its class in all France.

The Chateau de Ripaille was originally built by Amadée VIII as a *rendez-vous de chasse.* "Near the Couvent des Augustins he built himself a chateau of seven rooms and seven towers,

after the death of his wife, Marie de Bourgogne, in 1434," say the chronicles.

Here Amadée shut himself up with six fellowmen, either widowers or celibates, who formed his sole counsellors and society. The Council of Bale of 1439 sent the Cardinal d'Arles and twenty-five prelates to offer the self-deposed monarch the papal crown. The attractions of the position, or the inducements offered, were seemingly too great to be resisted, and, as Felix V, he was made Pontiff in the Église de Ripaille in the same year.

Soon the cramped quarters of the chateau and all the town were filled with a splendid pageant of ambassadors, prelates and dignitaries. All were anxious to salute in person the new head of the Church. France, England, Castile, the Swiss Cantons, Austria, Bohemia, Savoy and Piedmont recognized the new Pope, but the rest of Christendom remained faithful to Eugene IV. Ripaille and Thonon received such an influx of celebrities as it had never known before, nor since.

The towered and buttressed walls remain in evidence to-day, but within all is hollow as a sepulchre. The great portal by which one passed from the chapel to the dwelling is monumental from every point of view. What it

lacks in architectural excellence it makes up in its imposing proportions, and moreover possesses an individual note which is rare in modern works of a similar nature.

The chief centre after Thonon, going east, is Évian, with which most travellers in France are familiar only as a name on the label on the bottle of the most excellent mineral water on sale in the hotels and restaurants. The " Eau d'Évian " is about the only table water universally sold in Europe that isn't " fizzy," and is accordingly popular — and expensive.

Évian, sitting snug under the flank of Mont Bénant, a four thousand foot peak, its shore front dotted with little latteen-rigged, swallow-sailed boats is the " Biarritz de Lac Leman," but a Biarritz framed with a luxuriant vegetation, whereas its Basque prototype is, in this respect, its antithesis.

Twenty thousand visitors come to Évian " for the waters " each year now, but in 1840, when the delightful Tapffer wrote his " Voyages en Zig Zag," it was difficult for his joyous band of students to find the change for a hundred franc note. Aside from its fame as a watering-place Évian has no little architectural charm.

The waters of Évian and their medicinal

properties were discovered by a local hermit of the fifteenth century who loved the daughter of the neighbouring Baron de la Rochette. This daughter, Beatrix, also loved the hermit, all in quite conventional fashion, as real love affairs go, but the obscure origin of the young man was no passport to the good graces of the young lady's noble father, who had fallen ill with the gout or some other malady of high living and was more irascible than stern parents usually are.

So acute was the old man's malady that he caused it to be heralded afar that he would give his daughter in marriage to him who would effect a cure. This was a new phase of the marriage market up to that time, but the hermit, Arnold, at a venture, suggested to the baron that he had but to bathe in the alkaline waters of Évian to be cured of all his real or imaginary ills. The miraculous, or curative, properties of the waters, or whatever it was, did their work, and the lovers were united, and the smiling little city of Évian on the shores of Lac Leman has progressed and prospered ever since.

The origin of Évian is lost in the darkness of time, though its nomenclature is supposed to have descended from the ancient *patois* Evoua

(water), which the Romans, who came long before the present crop of flighty tourists, translated as Aquianum. From this one gathers that Évian is historic. And it is, as much so as most cities who claim an antique ancestry. From the thirteenth century Évian possessed its chateau-fort, surrounded by its sturdy bulwarks and a moat. Some vestiges still remain of this first fortification, but the wars between the Dauphin of the Viennois and the Comtes de Genevois necessitated still stronger ones, which were built under Amadée V and Amadée VI.

Within the confines of the town are three distinctly defined structures which may be classed as mediæval chateaux: the Chateau de Blonay, the Tour de Fonbonne, and the Manoir Gribaldi, belonging to the Archbishops of Vienne. This last has been stuccoed and whitewashed in outrageous fashion, so that unless the rigours of a hard winter have softened its violent colouring, it is to-day as crude and unlovely as a stage setting seen in broad daylight. It has moreover been incorporated into the great palatial hotel which, next to the more splendid Hotel Splendid on the height, is the chief landmark seen from afar. *Sic transit!*

Évian's parish church, capped with an enormous tower, is most curious. A great Place,

or Square, has been formed out of the ancient lands of the Seigneurie of Blonay, which belonged to Baron Louis de Blonay, Vice-Roi de Sardaigne. The seigneurial residence itself has been transformed, basely enough, one thinks, into a casino and theatre, with an *art nouveau* façade. Not often does such a debasement of a historic shrine take place in France to-day. Sometimes a fine old Gothic or Renaissance house will disappear altogether, and sometimes a chateau, a donjon or even a church may be turned to unlikely public uses, such as a hospital, a prison or a barracks. This is bad enough, but for an historic monument to be turned into a music hall and a gambling room seems the basest of desecration. That's a great deal against Évian, but it must stand.

Another property once belonging to the same proprietor, and known as the Manoir de Blonay, a name continually recurring in the annals of the Chablais, is to be noted beyond the town, near the little village of Maxilly.

Beyond Évian is "La Tour Ronde," a name given to a structure on the edge of the lake. The nomenclature explains itself. A dismantled donjon of the conventional build rises grim and militant among a serried row of coquettish villas, chalets and hotels, but uncouth as it is,

using the word in a liberal sense, it forms a contrasting note which redounds to its benefit as compared with the latest craze for fantastic building which has been incorporated into many of the houses which line the shores of the lake. Your modern tourist often cares as much for an armoured cement, green tiled villa with a plaster cat on its ridge pole as he does for a great square manoir of classic outline, or a donjon with a *chemin de rond* at its sky line and a half-lowered portcullis at its entrance.

Meillerie, just beyond the Tour Ronde, is ever under the glamour cast over it by Jean Jacques Rousseau. A souvenir of the hero of "La Nouvelle Heloise" is here, the vestiges of the grotto where Saint Preux sought a refuge. As a sight it may compare favourably with other grottos of its class, but that is not saying that it is anything remarkable.

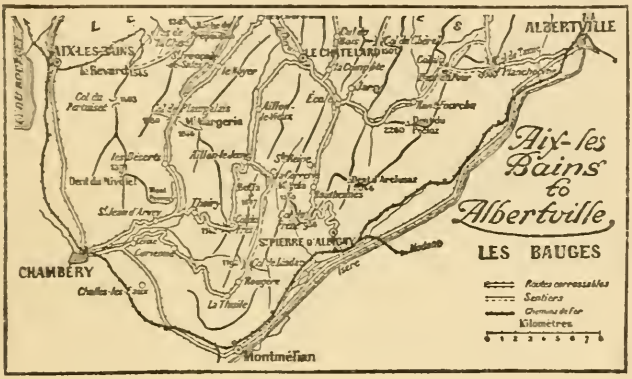
CHAPTER XIX

THE MOUNTAIN BACKGROUND OF SAVOY

"La Savoie," say the French, is "La Suisse Française," and indeed it is, as anyone can see and appreciate. With respect to topography, climate and nearly all else this is true. And its historic souvenirs, if sometimes less romantic, are more definite and far more interesting, in spite of the fact that the sentimentally inclined have not as yet overrun the region; it may with confidence be said that they have not even discovered it.

The amalgamation of Savoy with France was fortunate for all concerned. As President Carnot said, when on a speech-making tour through the region in 1892: "Can any of us without emotion recall those memorable days when the Convention received the people of this province with the welcome: 'Generous Savoyards! In you we cherish friends and brothers; never more shall you be separated from us.'" Savoy was ever more French in spirit than Italian in spite of its variable alliances.

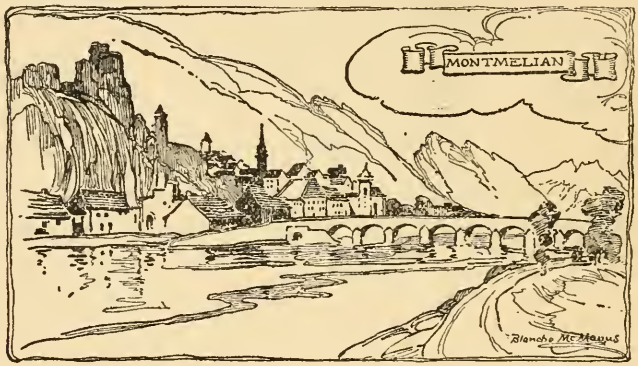
Leaving the resorts like Aix-les-Bains, Annecy and Évian behind, and following the turbulent Isère to its icy cradle beneath the haunches of Mont Saint Bernard, one may literally leave the well-worn travel track behind, the railway itself striking off Italy-wards via a gap in the mountain chain to the southeast,



where it ultimately burrows through the *massif* of the chain of which Mont Cenis forms the most notable peak.

Just at the confines of Dauphiny and Savoy the Isère sweeps majestically around the forefoot of the fortress of Montmélian, which guards the mountain gateway to the snowbound upper valleys. Montmélian can be seen from a great distance; from a great distance even one may imagine that he hears the echoes of the

cries of the victims of the cruel Seigneurs de Montmélian who once lived within its walls. Their barbarous acts were many, and historic facts, not merely legendary tales, perpetuate them. It is the knowledge that such things once existed that makes the suggestion of course, but these are the emotions one usually likes to have nourished when viewing a mediæval castle.



Montmélian's chateau-fort played a very important role in the history of Savoy. It was one of the finest fortresses of the States of Savoy, and was the chief point of attack of François Premier, who, in 1535, succeeded finally in taking it, but by treason from within. The French from the moment of their occupation gave it a heavy garrison, and Henri II still further strengthened its massive walls, as did

also Henri IV later on. He called it " a marvellously strong place; a stronger one has never yet been seen."

In Montmélian's proud fortress-chateau, also, were born Amadée III and Amadée IV, Princes of Savoy. Once it was considered, and with reason apparently, the strongest fortress of Savoy, and was for ages the wall against which the Viennois Dauphins battled vainly. Treason opened its doors to François Premier and treason delivered it to Henri IV. This last giving over of the chateau was brought about by the wife of Sully, who by " sweet insinuations " got into the good graces of the wife of Brandes, the governor, and between them planned to win him over.

In 1690 it was again attacked and taken by the French, costing them the bagatelle of eight thousand men, for lives were cheap in those days compared to castles. It was a hollow victory, too, for the French, for they marched out again after the Peace of Ryswick.

In the early years of the eighteenth century the French again came into possession and immediately began the work of demolishing the defensive walls, leaving only the residential chateau, that which in its emasculated form exists to-day. Thus disappeared from the

scene, said the celebrated historian, Leon Menabrea, a fortress to whose annals are attached the names most grand and the events most important in Savoyan history.

The Montmayeurs, the feudal family which first made Montmélian its stronghold, have left a vivid and imperishable memory in the annals of Savoy. They were a warlike race to begin with, and bore the eagle and the motto Unguibus et Rostro in their family arms.

Legend recounts that the last of the seigneurs, having lost a case at law, invited the president of the court, one Fésigny, to dinner. Either before, or after, he cut off the judge's head, enclosed it in a sack bearing a label which read: "Here is a new piece of evidence for the court to digest," and deposited it on the public highway circling below the rocky foundations of Montmélian. This episode took place in 1465, and the ignoble seigneur naturally fled the country immediately. His reputation has ever lived after him in the region where the historic fact, or legend, of the "Dernier des Montmayeurs" is still current.

Near the rock-cradled chateau of Montmélian is La Rochette; there one sees the vast remains of a chateau which was overthrown by Louis XIII. This chateau, called also the Cha-

teau des Hulls, occupies one of the most strikingly imposing sites imaginable, and only in a lesser degree than Montmélian presents all the qualities which one would naturally suppose to be necessary in order to make such a work impregnable. It was heroically defended by Pierre de la Chambre, but the defence availed nothing, and now what is left has been built up into — of all things — a silk-mill. Its outlines might well be that of a mediæval chateau even now; site and silhouette each have this stamp, and it will take little exercise of the imagination to picture the smoke from its chimneys as coming from the fires which may have been lighted at some epoch before the invention of the steam engine. There is nothing, from a distant point of view, to suggest that the old Chateau des Hulls is the murky, work-a-day hive of industry that it is.

Above Montmélian is Saint Pierre d'Albigny, where rises the ancient and formidable chateau of the Sires de Miolans. In the eighteenth century it was a prison of state incarcerating many famous personages, among them the celebrated Marquis de Sade, the story of whose escape would make as thrilling a chapter as was ever read in a romance of the cloak and sword variety. Another famous, or infamous, pris-

oner was the unfortunate Lavin, the minister of finance of Charles-Emmanuel III, who was imprisoned because of his fine, but unappreciated, talent for copying bank-notes. For twenty-four years Lavin languished in the dungeons of Miolans; indeed it was within these walls that he passed the greater part of his life after becoming of age. For this reason Miolans may be called the Bastille of Savoy.

Miolans is typical of the middle ages. It can be seen, it is said, fifty kilometres away, either up or down the Isère. This one can well believe. It can only be compared to a castled burg of the Rhine or Meuse: it is like nothing else in modern France. The great moats surround it as of old, its drawbridge, its *chemin-de-ronde,* its *cachets,* dungeons and *oubliettes* are quite undespoiled, and its chapel as bright and inspiring as if its functions served to-day as in the time of the seigneurs of the joint house of Miolans and Montmayeur, a family one of the most ancient in Savoy, but which became extinct in 1523.

The Sardinian government in 1856 — when Savoy belonged still to the Crown of Sardinia — sold the edifice for the paltry sum of five thousand francs, scarcely more than the price of a first rate piano. The buyer preserved and

made habitable, in a way, the mediæval fabric, but not without considerably lessening its genuine old-time flavour. This is not apparent from afar, and only to the expert near at hand, so the castle lives to-day as one of the most thrillingly romantic piles of its class in all the mountain background of Savoy. To-day the castle, for it is more a feudal castle than a modern chateau after all, is still in private hands, but no incongruous details have been further incorporated and the chatelain as lovingly cares for it as does that of Langeais in Touraine, perhaps the best restored, and the best kept, of all the habitable mediæval castles in the pleasant land of France.

In the time of the Savoyan dukes each of these upper valleys was deprived of communication with its neighbours, because of either the utter lack of roads, or of their abominable up-keep. A sort of petty state or kingdom grew up in many of these shut-in localities, each possessing its individual life, and, above all, ecclesiastical independence.

The sovereigns of each had their own particular lands and ruled with velvet glove or iron hand as the mood might strike them or the case might demand.

Still higher up above Montmélian, which may

properly be considered the barrier between the lower and the upper valleys of the Tarentaise and the Maurienne, are scores of these chateaux, as appealing, and with reason, as many more noble in outline and record elsewhere. At Grésy is one of these; at Bathie is a fine feudal ruin with a round and square tower of most imposing presence; Blay has another, with a wall surmounted by a range of tripled tourelles; Feisons has yet another, and a castle wall or an isolated tower is ever in view whichever way one turns the head.

The roadway through Albertville and Moutiers leads into Italy over the Petit Saint Bernard; that by the valley of the Maurienne over the Mont Cenis. Here, just as Lans-le-Bourg is reached, you may still see the signboards along the road reading: "Route Imperiale No. 16: Frontière Sarde à 10 kilom." It would seem as though Lans-le-Bourg had not yet heard that the Empire had fallen, nor of the creation of the unified Italian Kingdom.

Still penetrating toward the heart of the Savoyan Alps one soon reaches Albertville, primarily a place of war, secondly a centre for excursions in upper Savoy. This gives the modern note. For that of mediævalism one has to go outside the town to Conflans, where sits

the old town high on a rocky promontory, with a picturesque citadel-fortress filled with souvenirs of warlike times.

The Chateau du Manuel flanks the old fortress on one side, and the garrison barracks of to-day was at one time an old convent of Bernardins. This structure of itself is enough, and more, to attract one thither. It is built of red brick, with a range of curiously patterned twin windows. Besides these attributes the faubourg has also the Chateau Rouge, another of the resting places of the Savoyan dukes.

The historic souvenirs of Conflans and its chateau are many and momentous. It defended the entrance to the Tarentaise, and was able to resist the terrible battering sieges of the troops of François Premier and Henri IV, which was more than Miolans could do, in spite of the fact that it was supposedly a more efficient stronghold.

The town itself was erected into a Principality in favour of the Archbishops of the Tarentaise, and in 1814, following upon the Treaty of Paris, which gave back to Sardinia a part of its estates, the administrative authorities of Savoy took up their seat here.

All around are modern forts and batteries only to be arrived at by military roads climbing

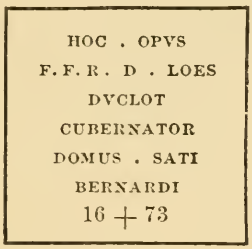
the mountain-side in perilous fashion, but they have nothing of sentiment or romance about them and so one can only marvel that such things be.

The neighbouring Fort Barraux is one of the marvels of modern fortresses, rebuilt out of an old chateau-fort. This fortress was originally constructed before the end of the sixteenth century by Charles-Emmanuel de Savoie, and taken over, almost without a struggle, by Lesdiguières, almost before the masons had finished their work for the ducal master.

"Wait," said the Marechal to his king, "we will not be in a hurry. It were better that we should have a finished fortress on our hands than one half built." And with a supreme confidence Lesdiguières waited six months and then simply walked up and "took it" and presented it to his royal master.

At Montvallezen-sur-Séez, in the Tarentaise, there existed, in the seventeenth century, a sort of a monkish chateau, at least it was a purely secular dwelling, a sort of retreat for the Canon of the Hospice of Saint Bernard. It was built in 1673 by the Canon Ducloz, and though all but the tower has disappeared, history tells much of the luxury and comfort which once found a place here in this "Logement du

Vicar.'' The tower rises five stories in height and contains a heavy staircase lighted on each landing by a single window. From this one judges that the tower must have been intended as a defence or last refuge for the dwellers in the chateau in case they were attacked by bandits or other evil doers. On arriving at the final floor, the walls are pierced with ten windows. A carven tablet reproduced herewith tells as much of the actual history of the tower as is known.



CHAPTER XX

BY THE BANKS OF THE RHÔNE

The boundary between Dauphiny and Provence was by no means vague; it was a well defined territorial limit, but in the old days, as with those of the present, the climatic and topographic limits between the two regions were not so readily defined. The Rhône, the mightiest of French rivers when measured by the force and, at times, the bulk of its current, played a momentous historic part in the development of all the region lying within its watershed, and for that reason the cities lying midway upon its banks had much intercourse one with another.

Vienne, on the left bank of this swift-flowing

river, was the capital of the Counts of the Viennois, and the birthplace of the earliest of the "native" Dauphins, who afterwards transferred their seat of power to Grenoble. For this reason it is obvious that the history of Vienne and that of the surrounding territory was intimately bound up with the later mountain province of Dauphiny, whose capital was Gratianopolis.

As the capital of this mountain empire evolved itself into Grenoble, and the power of the Dauphins gradually waned at Vienne, Comte Humbert, who was then ruler at Vienne, transferred his sceptre to the heir of Philippe de Valois who built his palace in the ancient mountain stronghold of the Romans in preference to continuing the seat of governmental dignity and rule by the banks of the mighty Rhône.

From this one gathers, and rightly, that Vienne is one of the most ancient cities of Dauphiny, and indeed of all the Rhône valley. Its history has been mentioned by Cæsar:

"*Accolit Alpinis opulenta Vienna calonis.*"

In the fifth century it was the capital of the first Burgundian kingdom, and at a later period the official residence of the native Dauphins, the race that came before those eldest sons of

the French kings who wielded their power from their palace at Grenoble.

Vienne's architectural monuments are many and of all states of nobility, but of palaces, castles and chateaux it contains only the scantiest of memories.

Down by the river, at the terminus of the ugly wire-rope suspension bridge, the modern useful successor of the more æsthetic works of the mediæval "Brothers of the Bridge," is a most remarkable tower known as the "Tour de Mau Conseil." It has for a legend the tale that Pontius Pilate threw himself from its topmost story. History, more explicit than the over-enthusiastic native, says that it was only the shore-end or gatehouse of a chateau which guarded the river crossing, and was built by Philippe de Valois. There is a discrepancy here of some centuries, so with all due respect to local pride one had best stick to historic fact.

There is a Chateau de Pilate, so-called, on the banks of the Rhône just below Saint Vallier, a few leagues away, of which the traditional legend is also kept green. It may be only a story anyway, but if one is bound to have it repeated, it had best be applied at this latter point.

This tower of Philippe de Valois as it exists

Tower of Philippe de Valois, Vienne

to-day, also known as the " Clef de l'Empire," is thus much more explicitly named, for it was in a way a sort of guardian outpost which controlled the entrance and exit to and from the neighbouring Lyonnais.

Vienne, being the outgrowth of a city of great antiquity, its Roman remains are numerous and splendid, from the bare outlines of its Amphitheatre to its almost perfectly preserved Temple d'Auguste. Monuments of its feudal epoch are not wanting either, though no splendid domestic or civic chateau exists to-day in its entirety. Instead there are scattered here and there about the town many fragmentary reminders of the days of the first Burgundian kingdom, and of the later city of the counts and Dauphins.

In 879 A. D. the ruler of the province, Boson, Comte de Vienne, Arles et Provence, by his ambition and energy, was proclaimed king by the barons and bishops assembled in the Chateau de Mantaille, belonging to the Archbishop of Vienne and situated at Saint Rambert, between Vienne and Valence.

In the Rue de l'Hopital one sees two coiffed towers rising high above the surrounding gables. They are all that remain of the semi-barbarian Comte Boson's palace. In the pas-

sage entered by an antique portal, and running between two rows of rather squalid buildings, there is a slab which bears the following inscription:

LE PALAIS DE BOSON
SERVIT D'HOTEL DE VILLE
DE 1551–1771.

It is not a very convincing souvenir, but the sight of the great round towers, rising above the canyon-like alleys roundabout, at least lends aid to the acceptance of the assertion by one who does not demand more clearly defined proofs.

In the Rue Boson is another edifice which may have something in common with the life of the first Burgundian court. It is a house which combines many non-contemporary features and possesses a marvellously built winding Renaissance stairway and two great towers, one a mere watch-tower, seemingly, the other strongly fortified. Frankly these towers might be accessories of some church edifice, or yet the chimneys of a factory, or of an iron furnace, since, even considering their situation, there is nothing distinctively feudal about them. They are, however, of manifest ancient origin and served

either military or chateau-like functions. Of that there is no doubt in spite of their ungainliness.

Valence is a *bruyante,* grandiose city, which, without the Rhône or the mountains, might be Tours or Lille so far as its local life goes, and this in spite of the fact that it is on the border line between the north and the south.

"*À Valence le Midi commence*" is the classic phrase with which every earnest traveller in France is familiar, though indeed for three or four months of the year Valence is surrounded by snow-capped mountains. "The women of Valence are *vive et piquante*" is also another trite saying, but the city itself has nothing but its historic past to recommend it in the eyes of the sentimental traveller of the twentieth century.

The strategic position of Valence has made it in times past the scene of much historic action. With this importance in full view it is really astonishing that the city possesses so few historic monuments.

Almost at the juncture of the Isère and the Rhône, Valence to-day bustles its days away with a feverish local life that, in a way, reminds one of a great city like Lyons, to which indeed it plays second fiddle. There are few strangers

except those who have come to town from places lying within a strictly local radius, and there is a smug air of satisfaction on the face of every inhabitant.

Things have changed at Valence of late years, for it was once one of the first cities of Dauphiny where religious reform penetrated in the later years of the sixteenth century, and even in the preceding century it had already placed itself under the protection of Louis XI, fearing that some internal upheaval might seriously affect its local life. Valence has always played for safety and that is why it lacks any particularly imposing or edifying aspect to-day. When Napoleon was staying at the military school at Valence he wrote of it as a city "*sombre, severe et sans grace.*" There is no cause to modify the view to-day.

Almost the sole example of domestic architecture at Valence worthy to be included in any portrait gallery of great Renaissance houses, is that which is somewhat vulgarly known as the "Maison des Têtes." It was built in 1531 by the art-loving François Premier, not for himself but as a recompense for some less wealthy noble who had served him during his momentous Italian journey.

The name applied to this historic house is

most curious, but is obvious from the decoration of its façade. Who its owner may actually have been has strangely enough been overlooked by those whose business it is to write such things down. Certain it is that he was fortunate to have a patron who would bestow upon him so luxurious a dwelling as it must once have been.

Perhaps, to go deeper into the question, the edifice was one of those "*discrets chateaux*" which François had a way of building up and down France, where he might repair unbeknownst to the world or even his court. Surely, here, in a tortuous back street of the dull little city of Valence, in the sixteenth century, one might well consider himself sheltered from the few inquisitive glances which might be cast on his trail. The *œil de bœuf,* that Paris spy or coterie of spies, did not exist for the monarch at Valence.

The Maison des Têtes is the more remarkable by reason of its modest proportions and the exceedingly ornate and bizarre decorations of its façade. Below and above the window-frames is an elaborate sculptured frieze, and between the *arceaux* of the windows, even, are equally finely chiselled motives.

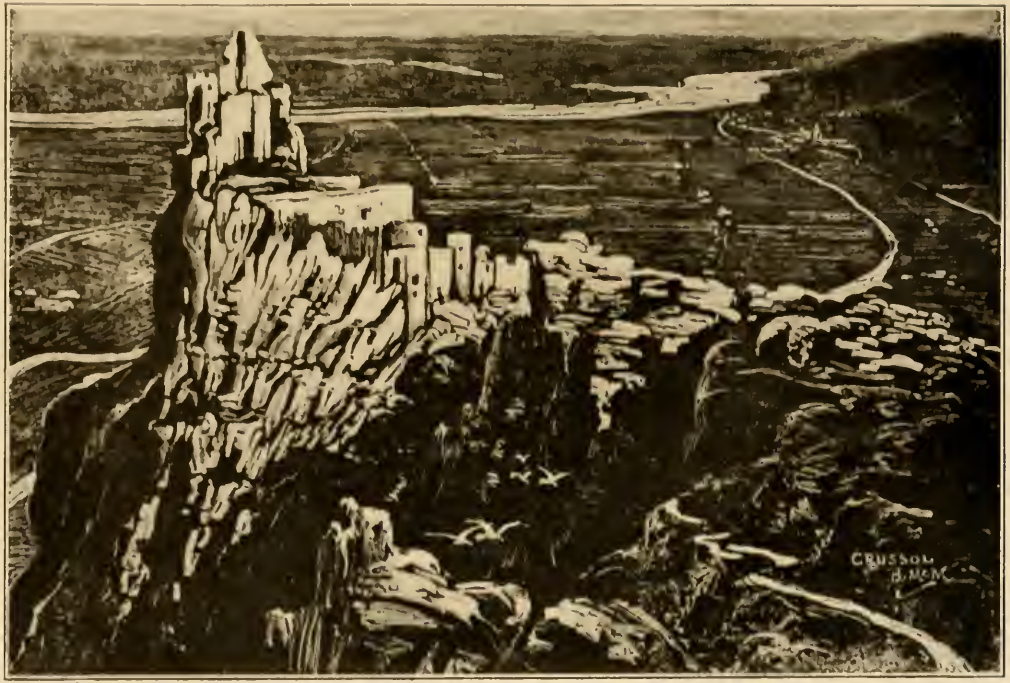
There is a series of medallions of five philos-

ophers and poets of antiquity, flanked on either side by a head of a Roman emperor and another of Louis XI. Two mutilated effigies, nearly life size, occupy niches on a level with the second story, and directly beneath the roof are posed four enormous heads, typifying the winds of the four quarters.

This interesting façade, no less than the vague history which attaches to the house itself, is in a comparative state of dilapidation. It seems a pity that in a city so poor in artistic shrines it were not better preserved and cared for. But there it is — Valence again! As a matter of fact the lower floor is occupied by a mean sort of a wine-shop, which assuredly casts an unseeming slur upon the proud position that the edifice once held.

Nearly opposite the Maison des Têtes is the house where the young Napoleon lodged in 1785-1786.

Just above Valence, at the confluence of the Isère and the Rhône, is the magnificent feudal ruin of Crussol, the guardian of the gateway leading from the south to the north. It sits at a great height above the swirling waters of the current on a peak of rock, and from the aspect of its projecting, fang-like gable is locally known as the "Corne de Crussol."



Chateau de Crussol

For years this typical feudal castle and military stronghold of great power belonged to the family of Crussol, the old Ducs d'Uzes. So vast was it originally in extent that it contained a whole village within its walls, and indeed there was no other protection for those who called the duke master, as the castle had appropriated to itself the entire mountain-top plateau.

Certainly Crussol must have been as nearly impregnable a fortress as any of its class ever built, for from its eastern flank one may drop down a sheer thousand feet and then fall into the whirlpool waters of the Rhône. This was sure and sudden death to any who might lose their footing from above, but it was also an unscalable bulwark against attack.

The panorama which opens out from the platform of the ruined chateau is remarkable and extends from the Alps on the east to the Cevennes on the west, and from the Vivarais on the north to the distant blue of the Vercors on the south, and perhaps, at times, even to Mont Ventoux in Vaucluse.

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE ALPS OF DAUPHINY

In the high Alpine valleys back of the Barre des Écrins is a frontier land little known even to the venturesome tourist by road, who with his modern means of travel, the automobile, goes everywhere. The conventional tour of Europe follows out certain preconceived lines, and if it embraces the passing of the Alps from France into Italy it is usually made by the shortest and most direct route. If the Saint Bernard or the Mont Cenis route seems the shortest and quickest, few there are who will spend a day longer and pass by the highway crossed by Hannibal, even though they would experience much that was delectable *en route*.

Southeast from Grenoble and Vizille is Bourg d'Oisans, the end of a branch railway line, and a diminutive, though exceedingly popular, French Alpine station. To the traveller by road it is the gateway to the high Alpine valleys of Dauphiny, whose heart is the

palpitating mountain fortress of Briançon, the most elevated of all French cities.

The highroad between Bourg d'Oisans and Briançon, really the only direct communication between the two places, was begun by Napoleon, that far-seeing road-builder whom future generations of travellers in France have good reason to rise up and call blessed. The roadway climbs up over the Lautret Pass, leaving the Galibier — the highest carriage road in Europe except the Stelvio — to the left, finally descending the southeastern slope and entering Briançon via Monetier-les-Bains, just opposite the famous Barre des Écrins, the highest of the French Alps, a peak of something over thirteen thousand feet, the first ascent of which is credited to Whymper as late as 1864.

Briançon's chateau, or rather Fort du Chateau, is no chateau at all, being a mere perpetuation of a name. Its history is most vivid and interesting nevertheless. Briançon itself is one vast fortress, or a nest of them. The bugle call and the tramp of feet are the chief sounds to awaken mountain echoes roundabout. It has rightfully been called the Gibraltar of the Alps, and commands the passage from France into Italy.

The town sits most ravishingly placed just

above the pebbly bed of the incipient Durance, which rushes down to the Mediterranean in a mighty torrent. Save Briançon's barrier of forts and fortresses and mountain peaks roundabout, the town is a sad, dull place indeed, where winter endures for quite half the year, and, until the last century, it was entirely cut off from the world, save the exit and entrance by the single carriage road which rises from Gap via Embrun and Argentière.

Charles le Chauve died here at Briançon in the edifice which stood upon the site of the present Fort du Chateau, and to that circumstance the place owes its chief historic distinction.

Above the city, a dozen kilometres away only, rises the famous international highroad into Italy. On one side of the mountain the waters flow through the valley of the Po into the Adriatic, and on the other, via the Durance and the Rhône, to the Mediterranean.

"Adieu, ma soeur la Durance,
Nous nous séparons sur ce mont:
Tu vas ravager la Provence,
Moi féconder le Piedmont."

On the extreme height of the pass is the famous Napoleon obelisk, commemorating the

passage of the First Consul in 1806, though indeed the pass was one of the chief thoroughfares crossing the Alps for long centuries before. In 1494 Charles VIII crossed here with the army with which he invaded Italy.

There remains little of actual monumental aspect at Briançon which has come down from other days. There is still something left of the old chateau of the Seigneurs de Briançon, but not much. This was the same edifice in which Charles le Chauve died, and the mountain retreat of the lords of the Tarentaise. The general outlines of its walls are still to be traced, and there is always the magnificent site to help one build it up anew, but that is all.

The donjon is built on a peak of triangular rock rising sheer from the torrent at the bottom of the gorge which has cut its way through the town from the source higher up under the Montagne de la Madeleine.

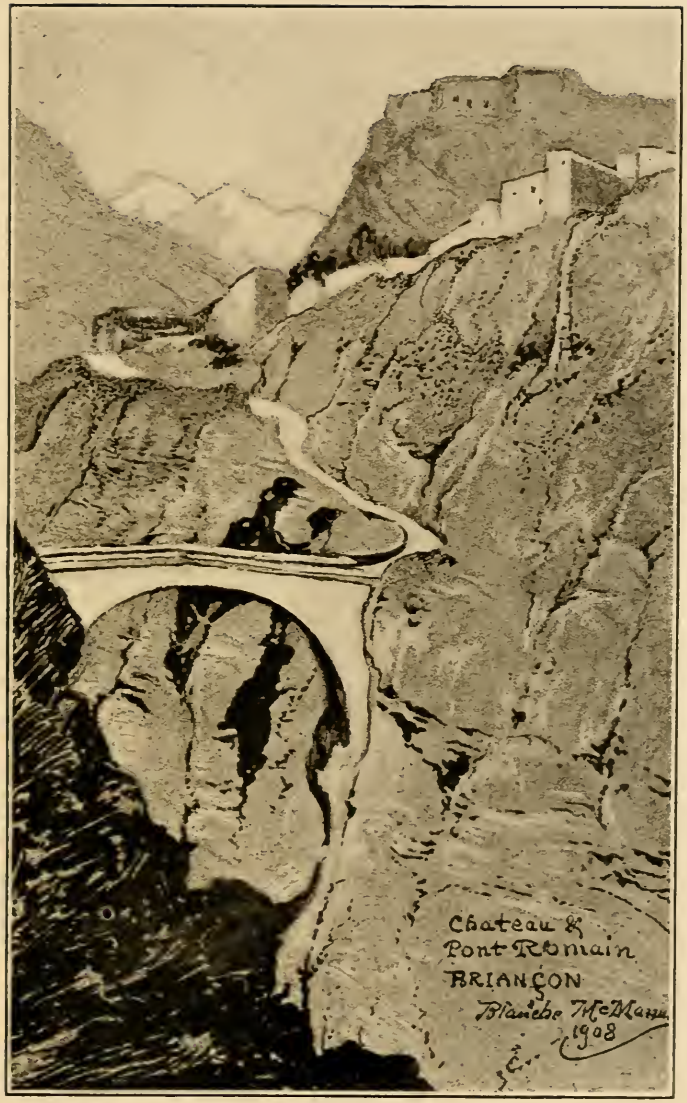
The donjon is still there in all its solidity and sadness, but it takes a climb of two hundred and fifty steps up an exceedingly steep stair to reach the platform of rock on which it sits, and this after one has actually arrived at the base.

The retreat was practically untakable by the enemy, and the seigneurs conceived the idea

of making it still more difficult of access by ignoring any convenient and comfortable means of approach. This must have been a great annoyance to themselves, but those were the days before time was money, so what matter? The old Roman way through the Tarentaise ran close along by the base of the chateau.

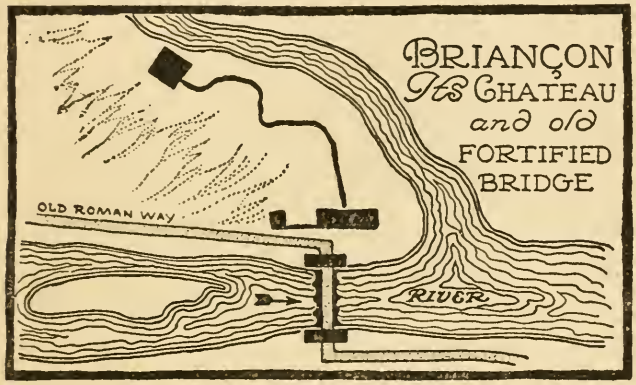
There are four distinct ruined elements today from which one may build up anew the silhouette of this mediæval stronghold. Chiefly these elements have been crumbled by stress of time, but here and there a reminder more definite in form, a gaunt finger of stone, points skyward, — a battery of them in fact surround the actual donjon.

The bridge on which the Roman road crossed the Durance was fortified, but was built of wood brought from the neighbouring mountain sides. It is supposed that the present stone structure is the direct successor of this wooden bridge, though it possesses the antique look which may well claim a thousand years. Aymon, the Seigneur de Briançon, when occupying the donjon on the heights, committed many extortions for toll on travellers passing this way. It was a sort of scandalous graft of the eleventh century which finally induced Héraclius, Archbishop of the Tarentaise, to petition



Chateau de Briançon

Humbert II, the overlord, Comte de Maurienne, to call his brother lord to a more reasonable method of procedure. This was to the Comte de Maurienne's liking, for he fell upon him tooth and nail and drove Aymon from his castle, leaving it in the ruined and dismantled condition in which it stands to-day.



This toll of roads and bridges was, by inherited right, the privilege of many local seigneurs throughout the feudality, but here the demand was so excessive, so much greater than the traffic could stand, to put it in modern parlance, that the concession was suppressed in the same fashion as has been often brought to bear on latter day monopolies badly administered. This thing doesn't happen often, but with the precedent of the toll bridge at Briançon it has

been steadily growing as a commendable practice. Incidentally the Seigneur of Briançon was killed in the struggle which deprived him of what he thought his right, but that was seemingly a small matter; the main thing was to do away with the oppression, and the Lord of the Maurienne, being one of those who did things thoroughly, went at the root of the evil. It is to his credit that he did not continue the toll-gathering for his own benefit.

The enormous flanks of wall of the Chateau de Briançon, which still stand, show a thickness in some instances of thirty feet, and the mortar of eight centuries still holds the blocks firmly together here and there. What a comparison between the ancient and modern manner of building!

The same strategic position which first gave a foothold to the seigneurial chateau was newly fortified in 1536, in order to resist the troops of François I. The French by chance, or skill, finally took the position, and occupied it for a quarter of a century, until the time when Savoy was returned to Emmanuel-Philibert by the victory of Saint Quentin. Again it was captured in 1690 by Lesdiguières, the date of the conquest of Savoy by Henri IV.

The walls of the chateau which are to be re-

marked to-day are probably of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; all other works are of the later fortifications, or of the more modern military structure of the present war system of France.

Briançon from the plain below has the appearance and dignity of a monumental and prosperous city. Near-by this aspect is lost entirely. As the French say, it is like a shako stuck rakishly over the ear of a grenadier. One may take his choice of view points, but at all events Briançon is marvellously imposing and romantic looking from a distance. Roundabout on every peak and monticule are forts bristling with guns, all pointing Italy-wards; whilst on the height of Mont Genèvre the Italians in turn train their cannon on Briançon's chateau and the plain beyond.

South from Briançon runs the great *route nationale* from Dauphiny and the Alps to Provence and the Mediterranean. It is replete with historic and romantic souvenirs, but like all the rest of these more or less poverty-stricken mountain regions, it lacks any great or splendid domestic or civic monuments on its route. Souvenirs of mediæval times there are, and many, but they were born of warlike deeds rather than peaceful ones.

Midway between Briançon and Embrun is Mont Dauphin, another key to the Italian gateway. The fortress is a conspicuous point of rock sitting strategically at the mouth of the river Guil at its junction with the Durance. The fortress was the work of Vauban, and its bastions are built of a curious pink marble found in the valley of the Queyras. No doubt but that the fortress is impregnable, or was when built, but it would avail little to-day against modern explosives.

Up the valley of the Guil is the region known as the Val de Queyras, one of the " Protestant Valleys " of Dauphiny, where the religious wars under Lesdiguières, during the reign of Henri IV, raged fast and furious. Chateau Queyras, as its name indicates, is the seat of a mediæval pile which, if not stupendous with respect to its outlines, is at least more than satisfying when viewed from afar. It is an ancient feudal castle and befits its name, in looks at least, and was once the seat of the seigneurs of Chateau-Vieille Ville. Like the fort of Mont Dauphin it seemingly was built to guard the passage to the frontier by the Col Lacroix and the Col de Traversette.

Here as early as 1480 Louis II of Dauphiny cut a tunnel below the Col to make the road

between the French valleys and the rich plains of the Po the easier of passage.

South of Chateau Queyras is Saint Véran, the highest collection of human habitations in France, and one of the most elevated in Europe. It is commonly called the highest commune in Europe where the peasants eat white bread. Approximately its elevation is seven thousand feet, still some thousands below Leadville, one recalls. Because of its altitude also, it has been called the most pious village in France. This may or may not be so, but at any rate the place has ever been on the verge of changing its religion from Protestant to Catholic and from Catholic to Protestant. What is in the rarefied atmosphere, one wonders, to induce such fickleness in matters spiritual!

Embrun, of all the towns of this part of Dauphiny, is the most illustrious and famous. This is perhaps as much from its association with Louis XI as for any other reason, for it is reckoned one of the dullest towns in France.

The general aspect of Embrun is most singular as it snuggles intimately around the drab walls of an old donjon, the sole relic of its ancient feudal glory. The roof and gables of the houses of the town rise abruptly from the low levels to the height on which sits the donjon

and the shrine dedicated to the divinity of Louis XI, "Our Dear Lady of Embrun," as he called her.

To know more of what passed in the mind of Louis XI with regard to Embrun and its divinity one should re-turn the pages of "Quentin Durward." The monarch indeed resided so long in Dauphiny, at one place or another, that many of the most affecting scenes of his life were enacted here.

A Roman city was here in ancient times, and from this grew up a great strategic military base. Not a morsel of the débris of the Roman town remains, but the cathedral still preserves the best of Roman principles of building in the stones of its pillars and vaulting.

The donjon of the old chateau, the Tour Brune, as it is called, is not far from the cathedral, within the confines of the military barracks. It is, therefore, not accessible to the general public, unless by chance one makes the acquaintance of some genial Alpin-Chasseur who can be induced to do the honours — of course with permission of his superior, which on this particular occasion was, for us, not easy to get. The thing was finally "arranged." Military property in France is not for the vul-

gar eye, leastwise not in the vicinity of a frontier boundary.

The Tour Brune is accredited as the most ancient military edifice in Dauphiny. Gotran, Roi de Bourgogne, built it and ravished the valleys roundabout, using it as a base from which to make his pillaging sorties and then as a retreat in case he was hard pressed. This was according to the ethics of guerilla warfare at that time, and probably is to-day.

As a mere habitation, the Tour Brune could hardly have been very comfortable. It certainly never partook of any luxurious appointments or accessories, judging from its build alone.

The metropolis of the upper valley of the Durance is Gap, whose chief romantic memory, since indeed it has no worthy architectural monuments to-day, is recalled by the magnificent marble statue of the Connetable de Lesdiguières on the mausoleum of this Dauphinese hero, now installed in the Préfecture, having been brought thither from the warrior's natal chateau in the neighbourhood. It shows the protestant defender of the rights of Henri IV in Dauphiny clad in the full regalia of his fighting armour. It is worthy of record to note

that from being a protestant Governor of Dauphiny, Lesdiguières changed faith as did his royal master and became a Catholic, acquiring at the same time the title of Connetable de France as a mark of favour for his devotion to the tenets of his sovereign.

There is another Chateau de Lesdiguières, which lies out on the road running from Grenoble to Gap, via Corps and Vizille, and is nothing at all grand or monumental in aspect. For a fact, the chateau at Vizille was his preferred domicile, and the present shapeless, ruined mass, though built by the Connetable, was intended merely to be a mausoleum rather than a dwelling. He was actually buried here, his body having been brought hither from Italy, but the Revolution threw his ashes to the winds and his funeral monument was removed to Gap.

CHAPTER XXII

IN LOWER DAUPHINY

THERE is not a village or a town in Dauphiny, be it ever so humble, but which guards some vestige or tradition of some feudal chateau or fortress of the neighbourhood. Nor are ocular evidences wanting which even he who runs may read. This is far from stating that the region is strewn with noble and luxurious monuments as are Touraine or Anjou, but nevertheless he, or she, who knows how to translate the story of the stones may make up history to any extent he likes, and yet never finish the volume. And much of the tale will be as vivid and thrilling as that of the western and southern provinces, which are usually given the palm for romance.

On almost any site around one's horizon a seigneur might have built himself a chateau, an all but impregnable stronghold where he might sustain successfully the powers vested in him as a vassal of the Dauphin. This was

the usual procedure, and if many of these classic strongholds have disappeared, there are enough remaining to suggest the frequency and solidity of mediæval building in these parts, a species of castle building which here in the mountains differed not a little from that of the lowlands. It is just this view-point that makes the study of the chateaux of Dauphiny the more interesting. Even the imperfectly preserved ruins which crown many a peak and hill-top are suggestive of this unique and effective manner of castle building, and though many have fallen from sheer decay in later years, it is chiefly because they were undermined or overthrown in some great or petty quarrel, and not because their design was not well thought out nor their workmanship thorough. The picks of Louis XI caused more actual depredation than has the stress of time. Often but a local legend remains to tell the tale. Chambaraud, Mantailles, and Beaufort have disappeared, and Moras, Thodure and Vireville, all of them reminiscent of the prowess of the feudal barons, are in truth but dim reminiscences of their once proud estate.

Between Grenoble and Vienne is the Chateau de Bressieux, most picturesque, the first great requirement of a castle. It dates, in part, from

the twelfth century. That is its second qualification. Antiquity comes after picturesqueness in its appeal to even the traveller of conventional mould.

The Barons of Bressieux were by the right of their title members of the Parliament of Dauphiny. The situation of their chateau assured them the full and free exercise of their power, right or wrong, and, like all the Dauphinese seigneurs, they were practically rulers of a lilliputian empire.

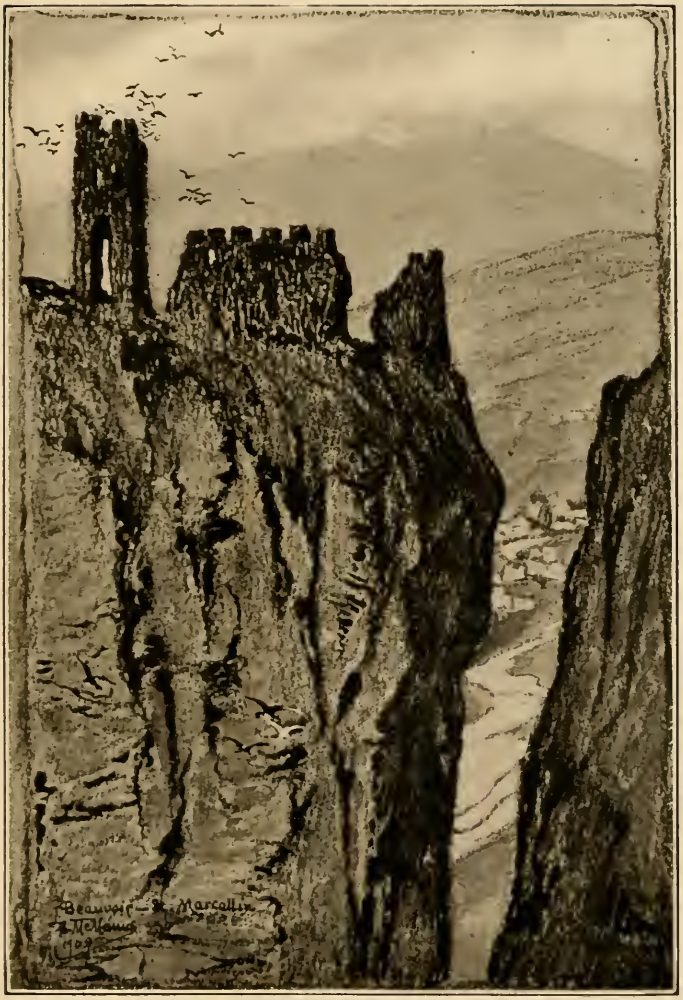
It seems that the celebrated Mandrin, a brigand so dignified that he was ranked as a "*gentilhomme,*" married into the family of Bressieux. History has apparently been unjust to Mandrin, "the *escroc* who possessed the manners of a dandy," but at any rate there be those in Dauphiny to-day who revere his memory before that of Bayard.

Saint Marcellin, in the lower valley of the Isère, is Italian in its general aspect and layout. Its house walls, its roof-tops and its arcaded streets are what most folk will at once call Italian. Be this as it may, it was originally the stronghold of the native Dauphins and the place in their *royaume* where they lived the most at ease and ate and drank the best. This is not conjecture or a far-away twentieth cen-

tury estimate, but a quotation from recorded history. The only thing one recalls of Saint Marcellin in the eating line to-day is an exceedingly pungent variety of goat's milk cheese. It is not for that that most of us make of the quaint little Dauphinese city a place of pilgrimage.

Saint Marcellin was the seat of the ancient Dauphinese Parliament, but since it was three times destroyed by fire, it actually possesses but few of its old-time monumental records in stone.

Beauvoir, scarce a kilometre away from Saint Marcellin, was the site of an incomparable chateau-fort which, it is sad to state, the enthusiasm of Louis XI for pulling things down did not leave unspoiled. To-day the chateau is a reminiscence only, but the situation, at the juncture of the Iseret, the Isère and the Cuman, tells the possibilities of its storied past in the eye's rapid review. There is little doubt that mere attack could have had but small effect on its sturdy walls, and that its having been destroyed or injured in any way must have been the result of weakness or lack of courage on the part of those who held it from within. Only two definite architectural details of this great fortress remain as they were in those warlike



Chateau de Beauvoir

times, the tower of the chapel and a flank of wall containing a series of ogival windows.

Still in the Vallée Saint Marcellinoise, as this junction of the three rivers is known, one sees the ignoble pile which marks the site of the former chateau of the Seigneur de Flandaines, one of the allies of the Dauphins, descended from one of the proudest families of the region.

The Seigneur de Flandaines would build himself a stronghold so sturdy that no one might take it from him, nor no one drive him out; primarily this was the formula upon which all castles were built. This was the very sentiment that the seigneur expressed to Louis XI at the time when the latter was but a Prince of Dauphiny:

"Lou vassa de fè valan mais que lousignous in buro."

It was only another way of saying (in the local *patois*) that a vassal clothed in armour was worth considerably more than one who dressed only in velvet.

The Dauphin took this to mean much, but he had a mighty envy for the Seigneur de Flandaines, and sought forthwith the ways and means by which to turn him out of his fortress abode.

The Dauphin invited the seigneur to a court ball and plied him and his retainers with food and drink, not only to excess, but to the point of insensibility. After this the troops of the Dauphin marched on Flandaines, took it without the least resistance, turned it over to the crowbars of the house-breakers, and went back and told their prince that their work was finished.

In the Chateau de Rochechinard, near Flandaines, the Dame de Beaujeau, emulator of the policy of Louis XI, martyred the poor Zizim, son of Mohamet II and brother of Bajazet. The history of the affair entire is not to be recounted here, but the Turk was exiled in France and chose this "pays de Franguistan," of which he had read, as the preferred place of his future abode.

Louis XI arranged with one of his Dauphinese familiars to take the infidel into his chateau. The alien was at first enchanted with his new life and played the zither and sang songs to the fair ladies of Dauphiny all the long day with all the gallantry of a noble of France. He went further: he would have married with one of the most gracious he had met: "It was a thing a thousand times more to be sought for than the control of the Ottoman Empire," he said.

For the moment it was the one thing that the Turk desired in life. Proof goes further and states that for the purpose he became converted to Christianity.

And the rest? The fair lady of Dauphiny did not marry the Turk; so he was sent a hundred leagues away in further exile and the daughter of the Béranger-Sasseange married and forgot — in fact she married three times before she eradicated the complete memory of the affair.

To-day the walls of Rochechinard are half buried in an undergrowth of vine and shrubs and are nothing more than a sad reminder of the history which has gone before.

Three leagues from Saint Marcellin and Beauvoir is Saint Antoine, a sixteenth century townlet of fifteen hundred souls which has endured much, as it has always existed unto this day. It possesses one of the most remarkable and astonishing flamboyant-Gothic churches in all Christendom.

During the middle ages Saint Antoine was a place of pilgrimage for Popes and princes, and the Dauphins, by reason of their intimate associations with the distinguished visitors to their country, gained both riches and power from the circumstance.

When Dauphiny came to be united to the Crown of France the tradition of Saint Antoine and its life-giving wine continued, and neither François Premier nor Louis XI neglected to make the journey thither. In the case of François Premier there may have been another good, or at least sufficient, reason, for Saint Vallier and Diane de Poitiers were but a few hours away. But that's another point of view, a by-path which need not be followed here, since it would lead us too far astray.

Following still the valley of the Isère, one comes to the Chateau de la Sone, at one time one of the strongest fortifications of the lower valley. It was the key to the Royonnais, and a subterranean passage led from its platform underneath the bed of the Isère itself to a chateau of the Dauphins on the opposite bank.

With the establishment of a silk-mill here in the chateau in 1771 all romance fled, and there being no more need for a subterranean exit, the passage-way was allowed to fill up. To-day one takes the assertion on faith; there is nothing to prove it one way or another.

It was here within these walls that Vaucanson (1709-1782), the "*sorcier-mécanicien,*" invented the chain without end, which revolutionized the silk-spinning industry.

The aspect of the chateau to-day, declassed though it is, is most picturesque. It is the very ideal of a riverside castle, for it bears the proud profile of a fortress of no mean pretensions even now, far more than it does that of a luxurious dwelling or a banal factory. It is one of those structures one loves to know intimately, and not ignore just because it has become a commoner among the noble chateaux of history.

Two very curious twin towns are Romans and Bourg-de-Péage, separated by the rapidly flowing waters of the Isère. If such a groupment of old houses and rooftops were in Switzerland or Germany, and were presided over by some burgrave or seneschal, all the world of tourists would rave over their atmosphere of mediævalism. Being in France, and off the main lines of travel, they are largely ignored, even by the French themselves. It is to be remarked that their history and romance have been such that the souvenirs and monuments which still exist in these curious old towns are most appealing. In that they are now seeking to attract visitors, a better fate is perhaps in store for Romans and Bourg-de-Péage than has been their portion during the last decade of popular touring.

Chateaux of a minor sort there are galore at Romans. Noble and opulent *hôtels privées* in almost every street reflect the glories of the days of the Dauphins, still but little dimmed. Here and there an elaborately sculptured façade without, or a courtyard within, bespeaks a lineal dignity that of later years has somewhat paled before the exigencies of modern life.

Romans of late years has become a *ville commercante* and has broken the bounds of its old ramparts and flowed over into new quarters and suburbs which have little enough the character of the old town. This is a feature to be remarked of most French towns which are not actually somnolent, though true enough it is that in population they may have gained very little on the centuries gone by. The demand is for new living conditions, as well as those of trade, and so perforce a certain part of the population has to go outside to live in comfort.

It was from the castle of Mazard at Romans, now a poor undignified ruin, that the last of the *native* Dauphins signed his abdication in favour of Philippe de Valois, who acquired the province for the French Crown. The event was induced by the loss of his infant son, who, by some mysterious agent, fell into the swift-flowing Isère at the base of the castle walls. Over-

whelmed with grief, the father would no longer hold the reins of state, and turned his patrimony over to the French king with content and satisfaction, stipulating only that the French heir to the throne should be known as the Dauphin henceforth, a state of affairs which obtained until the reign of Louis Philippe.

South from Romans lies Die, which in spite of its great antiquity has conserved little of its ancient feudal memories. There are some ancient walls with a supporting tower here and there, but this is all that remains to suggest the power that once radiated from the *Dea Vocontiorum* of the ancients.

From Die down towards the Rhône, through the valley of the Drome, is however a pathway still strewn with many reminders of the feudality. Where the valley of Quint enters that of the Drome, are Pontaix and Sainte Croix, each of them possessed of a fine old ruin of a chateau on a hill overlooking the town and the river-bed below.

Outside the stage setting of an opera no one ever saw quite so romantically disposed a landscape as here. The hills and vales bordering upon the Rhine actually grow pale before this little stretch of a dozen kilometres along the banks of the Drome.

The village of Sainte Croix, and its chateau, is the more notable of the two mentioned, and played an important rôle in the military history of the Diois. First of all the Romans laid the foundations of the fortress one sees on the height above the crooked streets of the town. This was originally a work intended to protect their communications from their capital city at Vienne, on the banks of the Rhône, with Milan, beyond the Alpine frontier.

Formerly, it was a stronghold of the Emperor of the Occident, and in 1215 the Emperor Frederick II gave it to the Bishop of Saint Paul-Trois-Chateaux, who, by the end of the century, had transferred it to the house of Poitiers. Catholics and Protestants occupied it turn by turn during the religious wars, when, after the taking of La Rochelle, Richelieu razed it, as he did so many another feudal monument up and down the length and breadth of France.

A great modern — comparatively modern — pile situated at the entrance of the village, has nothing in common with the old fortress on the height, and, though to-day it well presents the suggestion of a fortified mediæval manor, it is in reality nothing but a walled farm, a transformation from an old Antonian convent suppressed at the Revolution.

Index